₱120M in House cash advances unsettled

Story on Page A2

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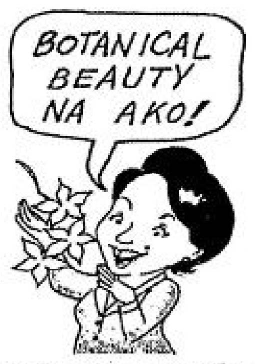
Gloria the orchid

By M.P. Marfil


BOTANICAL BEAUTY NA AKO!

SINGAPORE (via PLDT)—A long-stemmed orchid of Philippine origin was named after President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday in simple ceremonies held in

GLORIA/ A18

Solons summon 2 ex-Abu hostages

House body sees 'key' to ransom controversy

By Julie S. Alipala-Inot
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ISABELA CITY—Businessman Reghis Romero II and girlfriend Ma. Rhiza Santos Rodriguez, two of the first freed Dos Palmas hostages, have been summoned to a congressional inquiry to shed light on the alleged collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and certain military officers.

The two will be asked to "clarify reports that millions of pesos changed hands before their escape in Lamitan" in June, said Rep. Prospero Pichay, head of the committee conducting the inquiry into allegations by Fr. Cirilo Nacorda that five officers took bribes from the Abu Sayyaf.

The announcement came as the Armed Forces fended off another accusation and denied it was selling arms to the Abu Sayyaf, a claim made by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"We know for a fact that they (Abu Sayyaf) are getting firearms from the military. They buy these from the Southcom (Southern Command)," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told reporters yesterday in a telephone conference call.

"That's a fact. The military, particularly the Southern Command, has been selling firearms to the bandits since 1992," Kabalu said.

He said the proof was the recoilless rifles used by the Abu Sayyaf, which were only in the military's armory.

The military moved quickly to rebuff the accusations. "He is a rebel propagandist so I don't think his statements should be given any importance," military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said.

"Such statements are expected of him, being an enemy of the state," Adan added.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva said that the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers, who still hold 18 hostages, have "benefited from these allegations."

Adan said it was the 12,500-

SOLONS/ A18

A GREAT SOLDIER OF GOD AND OF THE COUNTRY

RANDY HORMILLOSA

MY GRANDPA, MY HERO
This girl remembers the heroism of her grandfather-soldier during a visit to his grave at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio in Makati City. The nation observed National Heroes Day on Sunday.

INT'L NETWORK PARTNER

Laguna de Bay joins Living Lakes

By Jerry Esplanada

SPECIAL REPORT

LAKE BAIKAL, Russia—Our very own Laguna de Bay made it!

The Philippines' largest lake has been admitted by "unanimous" vote to the prestigious Living Lakes network, an international body striving to preserve and rehabilitate endangered lakes and other inland bodies of water worldwide.

The 90,000-hectare Laguna Lake, one of Asia's largest lakes, was last week named the 18th Living Lakes partner during a five-day international conference attended by more than 160 scientists, environmentalists and government and business representatives who had traveled to this remote corner of Russia.

Natalia Martynova, vice chancellor of the Irkutsk State University, called the development "*horoshie novosti*," or good news, for the Philippines.

According to Jorg Durr-Pucher, one of the founders of the Global Nature Fund, a German-based group that created Living Lakes, "it was a unanimous vote."

Atsuhiko Okumura of the Shiga, Japan-based International Lake Environment Committee Foundation and NGO partner of Lake Biwa, confirmed that "representatives of the 17 Living Lakes partners all voted for Laguna de Bay's admission to the network."

"It's a breakthrough for Laguna de Bay and a milestone for Philippine environmental history," crowed Chito Macapagal, general manager for corporate development of Unilever Philippines, which sponsored Laguna Lake's bid to the Living Lakes.

Laguna de Bay and Morocco's Lake Marache were nominated during the body's fifth conference held in November in Lake Biwa, near Kyoto, Japan.

During the conference here, however, the network deferred its vote on Lake Marache.

The protection of Laguna Lake "has just been elevated to an international status," said Lennie Santos-Borja, head of the research and development division of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA),

LAGUNA/ A19

GMA back, lauds OFWs for boosting RP economy

By Martin P. Marfil

SINGAPORE (via PLDT)—A big crowd of cheering Filipino workers yesterday mobbed President Macapagal-Arroyo like a movie star as she lauded them for boosting the Philippine economy.

Ms Macapagal, looking tired but happy, returned to Manila at 6:30 p.m. Sunday to report on the gains of her five-day state visit to Singapore and Brunei.

At the end of her three-day visit to Singapore, Ms Macapagal called on all overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to serve as individual ambassadors promoting the country as a safe tourism and investment destination.

On two occasions, she stressed that the Philippine economy would remain heavily dependent on the $8 billion that overseas Filipino workers remit home yearly.

"The Filipino people are thanking you," Ms Macapagal, who wore a purple suit, told Filipino workers when she opened a new education center for them in Singapore.

More than 1,000 maids stood under the blazing tropical sun, waving Philippine flags and placards saying "We love you." Many screamed and wiped away tears as they jostled to shake the President's hand or take her picture.

"We are very happy that she appreciates us," said Ester Villalon, a Boholano who has worked as a maid in Singapore for 11 years.

"We are very proud if we can help the Philippines through the work we do here," Villalon added.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said Filipino professionals residing in Singapore would

GMA BACK/ A18

Senate probers flirting with 'coup' syndrome

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

SENATORS are playing with fire by raising the specter that "sinister" forces are undermining the Senate to pave the way for a military takeover.

This false issue is driving the Senate toward a confrontation with the Armed Forces and is shifting the focus of its inquiry away from Col. Victor Corpus' allegations of money laundering and drug trafficking against Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

The senators flirted with the "coup" syndrome last week when they summoned Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to appear at their Question Hour.

In that unprecedented forum, where the senators assembled en banc, they grilled Reyes on the operational aspects of the military intelligence gathering, i.e., intelligence priorities, the criteria for witnesses being protected from harm, how intelligence fund is spent, etc.

It was a microscopic concentration of questioning that had little to do with the security aspects of "narco-state" crimes that are the main concern of the Senate inquiry. In the process, Lacson was forgotten.

SENATE/ A18

Ex-Namfrel 'Marine' no stranger to safe houses

By Christian V. Esguerra

"AM I my brother's keeper?"

For Fr. Carmelo Càluag II, the answer is a simple yes—even if the "brother" in need is Angelo "Ador" Mawanay, a confessed delivery boy for shabu, smuggled cell phones and ransom money.

"It was out of human compassion," says Caluag, vice president for planning, development and alumni affairs at the Ateneo de Manila University, in explaining why he provided a safe house for such a man with a checkered past.

Keeping distressed people safe is actually not anything new for Caluag.

As a 28-year-old seminarian during the 1986 snap elections, he provided safe houses for several Commission on Elections computer experts who walked out of the canvassing center at the Philippine International Convention Center after they had been ordered to doctor the results.

The walkout amounted to a death sentence for the computer experts, Caluag recalls. The dictator's men were hunting them and they needed a place to hide.

Together with other so-called Namfrel "Marines"—volunteer nuns, priests and seminarians of the National Citizens Movement for

EX-NAMFREL/ A18

PHOTOS BY ERNIE SARMIENTO

CALUAG: "My support is more on the moral and the spiritual."

MAWANAY: "Will we still be safe when this is all over?"

Ador: Altar boy turned English-speaking fence

By Carlito Pablo

"MISHA, you can't watch TV now," the man affectionately tells his son in front of a guest.

"Can I just play catch outside?" the kid replies, holding a frisbee.

"No, it's raining outside."

Sounds like the usual English banter in an affluent setting, except that in this case, the exchange took place inside a cramped billet at the tightly secured headquarters of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Controversial witness Angelo "Ador" Mawanay is talking to his 5-year-old son Misha.

"My wife comes from a well-to-do family. We have two boys and we speak English at home," says Mawanay, the alleged former civilian agent who has accused Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson of high crimes, ranging from drug trafficking to big-time smuggling.

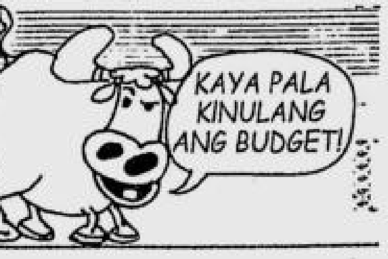
Before he became Ador, Mawanay was simply "Gelo" to friends.

Mawanay spent his elementary and high school years at the Holy Child School in Tondo, Manila. He says he was a diligent altar boy at the Sto. Niño de Tondo Church.

"Never missed the Sunday Mass, the *misa de gallo* straight, processions," he recalls.

ADOR/ A18

Second FRONT PAGE


KAYA PALA KINULANG ANG BUDGET!

₱120M in House funds unsettled

By Donna S. Cueto

THE HOUSE of Representatives last year had unliquidated cash advances of some P120 million, incurred mainly by congressmen who made additional cash advances despite having unliquidated balances the previous year.

On the other hand, the Commission on Audit reported, the Senate only had P26.4 million in unliquidated cash advances as of Dec. 31, 2000.

The latest report of the COA also listed various violations of the law and provisions of the Government Accounting and Auditing Manual (GAAM), for which certain officials of Congress could be held liable.

"Of the accumulated balance of P120,034,930.76, a substantial amount was given to congressmen," the COA report said.

"Additional cash advances were given to them despite their unliquidated balances because the purpose of their advances was usually in aid of legislation," it said.

The P120,034,930.76 in outstanding cash advances includes the P46,137,199.73 in still unliquidated advances made the previous year.

Aside from the P120 million, the House last year also incurred an "overdraft" of P60 million due to "unauthorized" expenses that exceeded the legislative body's budget allotment.

It also "failed to complete the physical inventory of its properties" amounting to P357.7 million, as it did not reconcile its property records with accounting records, all in violation of the GAAM.

"Cash advances in the amount of P120,034,930.76 remained unliquidated although the purpose for the grant of the said cash advances had long been achieved in violation of Presidential Decree 1445 and the GAAM," the COA report said.

The COA also found "unauthorized disbursements" done by Congress, with an overdraft amounting to P59,064,664.11 in violation of the GAAM and PD 1177.

"Analysis of the trial balance for the year ending Dec. 31, 2000 revealed that the agency incurred an overdraft of P59,064,664.11," the COA report to the House said.

"This resulted when the agency incurred obligations amounting to P3,248,806,602.11 when the total allotments received amounted to only P3,189,741,938.00," the COA report said.

The COA learned the Congress budget officer charged current obligations to cash allocations instead of allotments, resulting in the "overdraft."

The chairman of the committee on accounts justified the overdraft by saying the "change in leadership in the House also affected the usage of funds."

The House management also told the COA there was an "increase in expenses for salaries and benefits of contractuals, consultants and co-terminus staff."

"Also, a new set of management priorities and projects entailed additional funding. At this time, the prosecution panel was formed and unprogrammed expenses had to be funded out of (the) current year's appropriation," it said.

Congress partially used the "excess cash available in the bank" which came from the Tax Remittance Advice (TRA), and should not have been touched.

Records also showed the Land Bank of the Philippines had an unliquidated balance of P2,039,784.49 in payroll accounts of Congress due to the late submission of reports and other documents to the "cashiering office."

COA chair Guillermo Carague submitted the report to Speaker Jose de Venecia on Aug. 15.

The COA said that of the Senate's P26.4 million in unliquidated cash advances, P2,825,263.72 had been granted in prior years to "various persons who are no longer connected with the agency, resulting in the accumulation of unliquidated advances in the books."

"Of the P2,825,263.72, P1,175,777.27 or 42 percent was incurred by the late senator (Mamintal) Tamano," it said.

The COA listed 35 persons who had unliquidated cash advances but were no longer connected with the chamber or had died like Tamano.

On the list was Sen. Edgardo Angara who had unliquidated cash advances totaling P47,600.21, and former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno who had an unliquidated advance of P24,926.

Next to Tamano, others who had big unliquidated advances were Romero Ortiz with P263,438.44; Anne Lourraine Santiago, P262,420.60; Carmen Padilla, P215,607.80; Rosemary Lenada, P198,062.11; Ma. Aurora Ledesma, P165,640, and Manuel Arevalo, P108,903.71.

The COA did not name the congressmen who had unliquidated cash advances.

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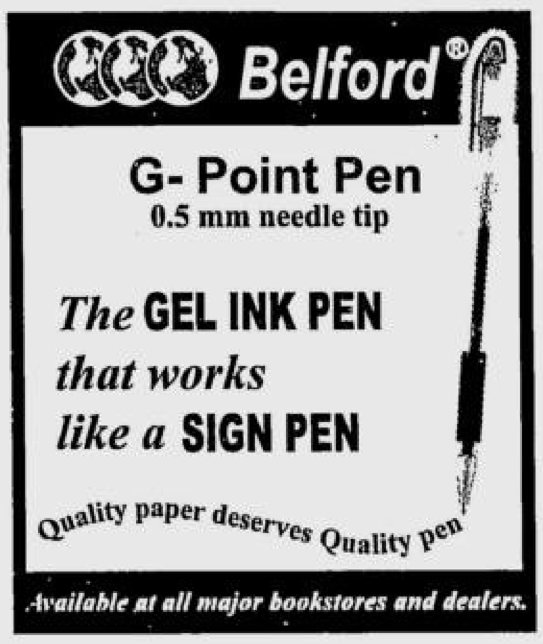
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Finance chief sees 4.6% growth next year

ECONOMIC growth should pick up to between 4.3 and 4.6 percent next year after a global slowdown this year, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said yesterday.

Economic expansion should "strengthen" next year with a better investment climate and increased business confidence, he told reporters.

CAMACHO

The country has been hard hit by a slowdown in electronics exports, and the government is projecting gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.3 percent—though independent analysts said Manila would be hard pushed to post a 3 percent growth rate.

GDP growth should pick up to between 4.3 and 4.8 percent next year, with gross national product vaulting to between 4.6 and 5.2 percent from a projected 3.8-4.3 percent range this year, Camacho said.

GDP grew by 4 percent last year. *AFP*

GMA told: Don't reopen jai alai

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was urged yesterday by her close allies in Congress not to exercise her option to reopen the jai alai in spite of a Supreme Court decision that a state-owned gaming agency had the franchise to run and collect bet on the Basque game.

"Don't open the Pandora's box, Madame President," was the advice of Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri after justices, voting 10-5, virtually gave the green light for the reopening of jai alai which was shut down by the high court itself last summer.

Rep. Robert Ace Barbers seconded Zubiri's call saying the "jai alai should not be allowed to rise from the ashes."

Zubiri said the government could not invoke extreme poverty in calling for the jai alai's reopening, even under the auspices of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., which the SC decision of Aug. 25 says has the franchise to run it.

Zubiri said Pagcor's 12 branches "have been breaking record after record of income earned. Even without jai alai, these are boom, and not lean, times for gambling."

Pagcor posted a record-breaking performance in 2000, earning a gross income of P14.47 billion, P2.2 billion more, or 18.2 percent up of its 1999 earnings, Zubiri said.

Barbers said "Pagcor is on track of exceeding its 2000 record this year."

"Twice this year, Pagcor broke its monthly record on income and sales. Its July income was the highest in its history," Barbers said.

Barbers and Zubiri agreed that reopening the jai alai would cause a "PR (public relations) nightmare" for the Malacañang occupant.

"One of the issues against Erap (Joseph Estrada) was the proliferation of gambling joints. It was an issue that precipitated his fall and it would be extremely awkward for his successor to sponsor a project he was pilloried for," Zubiri said.

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Synergy to boost tourism top agenda in tripartite congress

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism, in coordination with the travel trade private sector and local government units, is organizing the first Tripartite Congress on Tourism (Tricon) on Aug. 30 at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon said the Tricon is a meeting of minds to meld together the energies of concerned sectors in a unified direction to speed up tourism growth.

"The Tricon manifests the urgency of active cooperation among everyone to put the Philippines back in the company of major tourism destinations in Asia," he said.

"It is being held in recognition of the importance of tourism in bringing about development as it has the distinct benefit of stirring economic activity in a wide range of sectors," the tourism chief said, adding that tourism is now the world's number one industry.

In the coming decade, tourism in the Asian region is expected to grow by leaps and bounds. The Philippines must prepare the groundwork now if it wants to get its share of the benefits of this growth.

Three major clusters of tourism development issues will be tackled, namely: marketing and promotions, planning and development, and tourism services. Under tourism services are classified the concerns on tourist safety, peace and order, sanitation and pollution, traffic, immigration, and customs and social services.

Areas covered by planning and product development include destination accessibility, infrastructure, product development, tourism master plans, and transportation and human resource development. Under marketing are marketing campaign plans, advisories, public relations efforts and media familiarization trips.

After each discussion on the three clusters are presentation of action plans and resolutions.

"The country does not lack in good intentions from concerned sectors for the growth of tourism. What it lacks is a unified approach to achieve the common goal of bringing in more tourists to the country under the tenets of sustainable and socially responsible tourism," Gordon said.

Sponsors of the event, together with the DOT, are the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp., the Philippine Tourism Authority; the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Manila to host int'l manning meet

THE PHILIPPINES, the world's largest supplier of seafarers, will again host the most important international conference on crewing and training.

The 4th LSM (Lloyd's Ship Manager) Asia Pacific Manning and Training Conference is to be held from Nov. 19 to 22 in Manila at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel. The bi-annual conference follows the highly successful 3rd LSM Philippine Manning and Training Conference, which attracted over 500 delegates from some 30 countries in 1999.

This year's conference will carry the theme "A New Age of Maritime Employment." Following the publication of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 'white list' of countries complying with the international convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) '95, the focus has now shifted to new regulations covering employment, safety management and working hours as well as a tightness in the supply of competent seafarers.

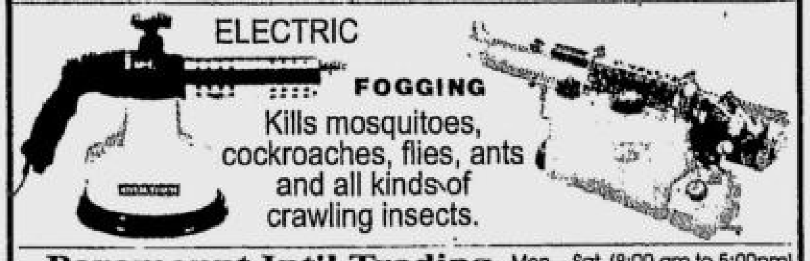
These will be the subjects of 16 presentations from international and local industry leaders such as International Commission on Shipping chair Hon. Peter Morris; Australian Shipowners Association chief executive Lachlan Payne and Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

The conference will also offer five pre and post-conference workshops covering such vital topics as: "The Future of the Manning Agent;" "Protection and Indemnity;" "Manning and Training for the Cruise Industry;" "Strategies to Combat Piracy and Robbery at Sea;" and "Strategies to Improve Crew Travel."

Participants will also be given the opportunity to visit four of the country's leading maritime schools including the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific in Mariveles, Bataan and IDESS in Subic Bay.

Firm bookings have already been received from many leading players around the world so early registration is advised for delegates. Early registrants pay only £500 for the conference proper. After Sept. 30, participants will be charged £150 per workshop. For those unable to attend, the conference papers will be made available for £370.

Inquiries and registration can be directed to Morenike Ogunmefun on +44(0) 1932 893861.



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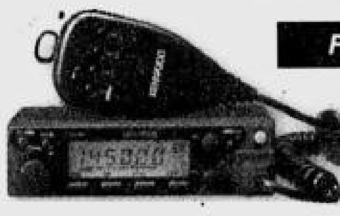

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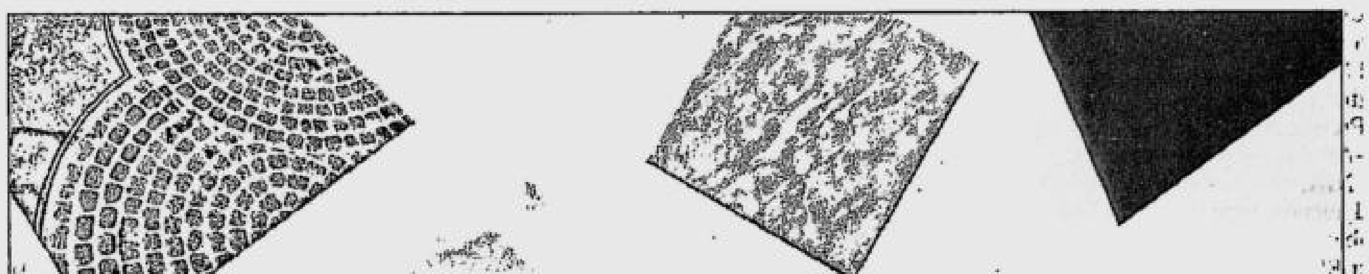

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EXTRA SECURITY

Chinese firm to resume work

By C. Gaylican

THE CHINESE construction firm China Import and Export Technologies has agreed to resume work at the P2.5-billion irrigation project in strife-torn Central Mindanao but has asked for extra security.

After stopping work for almost a week to mourn the death of its two engineers who were abducted and killed by Moro bandits, the Chinese firm will carry on with the construction work that has long been delayed because of skirmishes between the military and Moro rebels.

The Chinese company's deputy general manager, Shao Wei, clarified in a letter to NIA Administrator Jesus Emmanuel Paras that the reason for the work suspension at the project site was solely to mourn the death of their colleagues.

Shao said the team fully intends to complete the irrigation project despite the risks to life that they face.

"We can reach our target of irrigating at least 30,000 hectares of farm lands by Sept. 30 if security can be fully guaranteed on the job site and construction area," Shao wrote.

Shao also thanked the NIA for helping the Chinese Embassy to recover the bodies of Zhang Zhong Qiang and Xue Xing, the slain engineers.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has given the NIA, the project's lead agency, until September to complete at least 85 percent of the project. Otherwise, the Army engineering brigade will take over construction.

Originally set for completion in May 1998, the irrigation project which will irrigate thousands of hectares of farmlands in Maguindanao and North Cotabato provinces, has been much delayed because of the security situation there.

The Japanese, government which is financing the project through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, has extended the project loan until May 2003.

Paras said more NIA personnel and workers have been added to boost the contractor's work force to speed up the project's completion.

The Armed Forces has also been asked to increase the number of troops assigned to secure the construction area.

"We are working double time to put the project's completion on schedule," said Paras.

The project, which Paras said was critical for farm communities in Mindanao, will also include the construction of a dam, roads, drainage and other on-farm facilities.

It will benefit some 4,549 farmer beneficiaries in the towns of Pikit and Carmen in North Cotabato and Pagalungan and Pagagawan in Maguindanao.

The Japanese government through the JBIC is financing five ongoing irrigation projects in the country worth P14.5 billion, and which are to be completed in the next two to three years.

These include the P3.5 billion Casecnan Multi-purpose Project, the P623 million Tarlac Groundwater Irrigation System Reactivation Project, the P3.4 billion Pampanga Delta Development Project, the P2.5 billion Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project, the P2.1 billion Lower Agusan Development Project and the P2.38 billion Bohol Irrigation Project.

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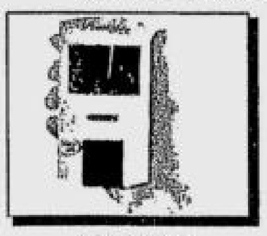

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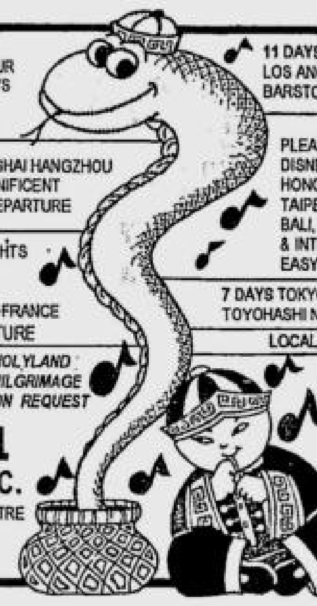

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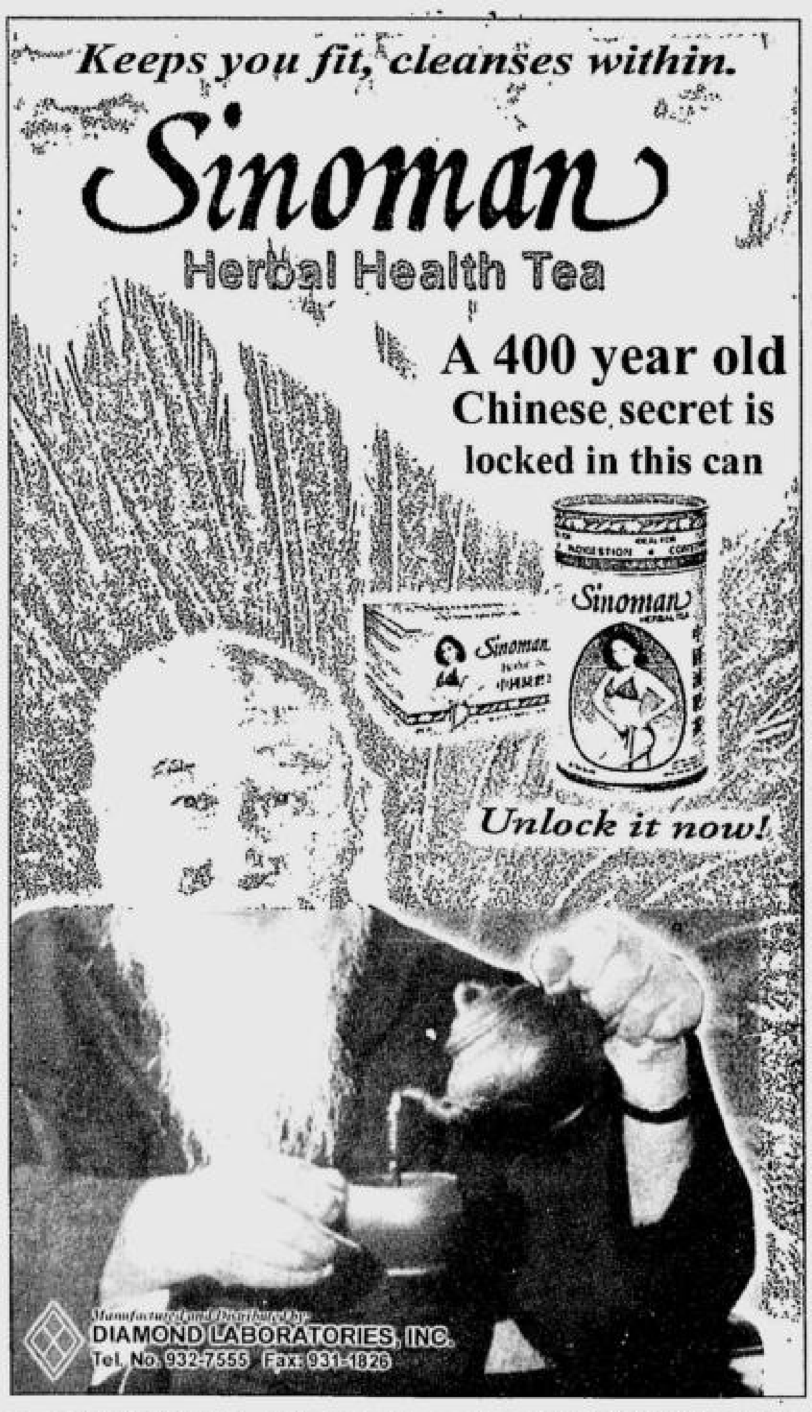
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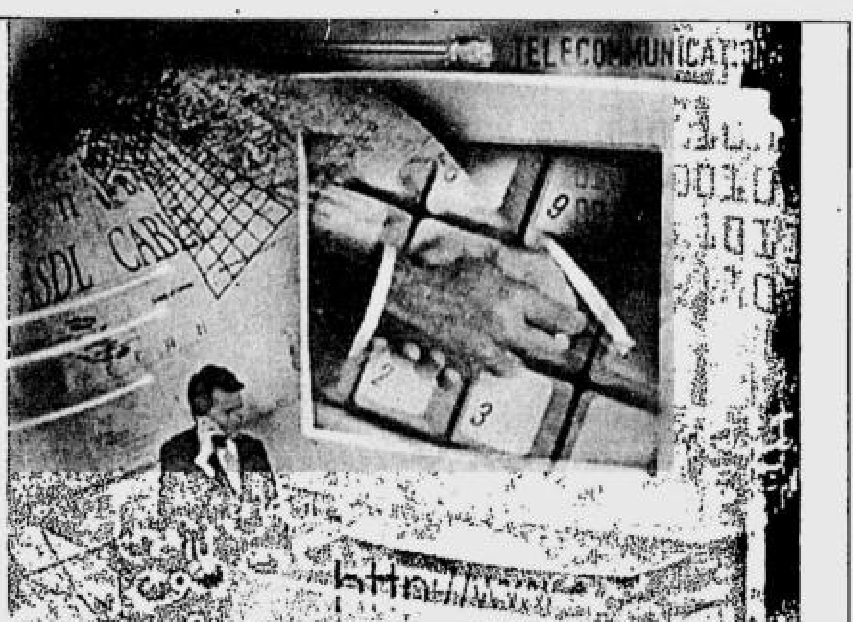

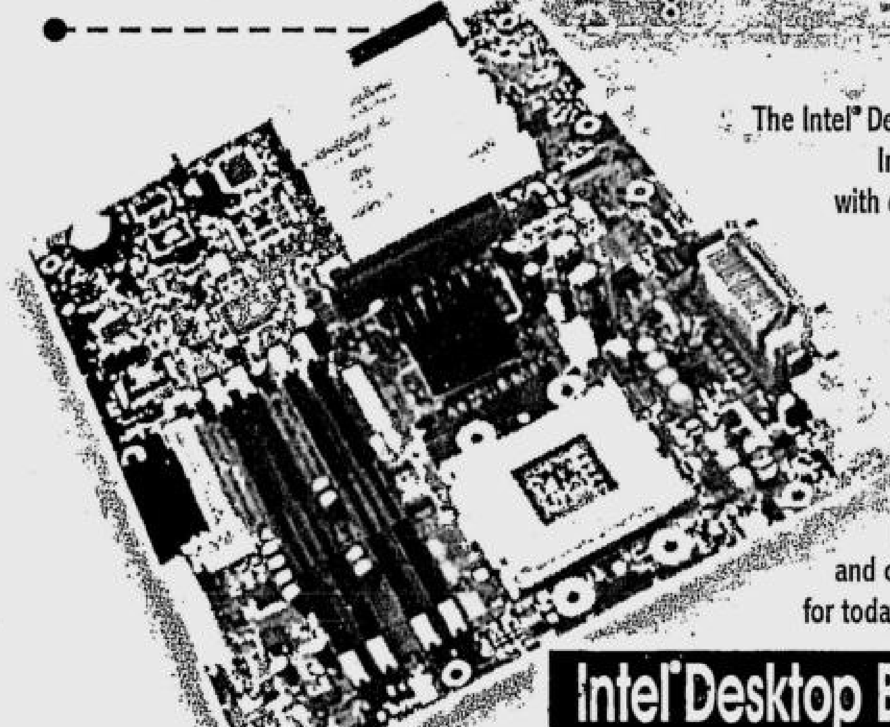

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HONDA

No lecture from Mr. Lee this time

By Martin P. Marfil

SINGAPORE (via PLDT)—There was no lecture on the Philippine brand of democracy but only well-meaning advice on a resurgent China when President Macapagal-Arroyo met Saturday night with Singapore elder statesman, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Nor did Lee, who famously angered former President Fidel Ramos when he remarked that the reason democracy did not work in the Philippines was because Filipinos lacked education, think to bring up his earlier criticism of Ms Macapagal's assumption to power as "not a plus for the democratic system."

Press Secretary Noel Cabrera said that Lee dealt mainly with the theme of the future of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, especially in the light of a resurgent China, when he met for 20 minutes with Ms Macapagal just before a state banquet held in her honor.

"It was a frank discussion of the issues... You could still see the old Lee Kuan Yew. The aura was still there, his mind was sharp and his views on geopolitics were very clear," said Cabrera, speaking in Filipino.

Lee's thesis was that China would be a very, very strong nation, particularly economically, and how Asean countries—individually and as a whole—could prepare for this eventuality, said Cabrera, of the few Cabinet members to have accompanied Ms Macapagal to the meeting.

With its strong economy and its impending entry into the World Trade Organization, China can be expected to compete fiercely for markets and labor, said Lee.

The Singapore leader said that as a hedge to counter a strong China, the Asean countries must stay united and trade with each other.

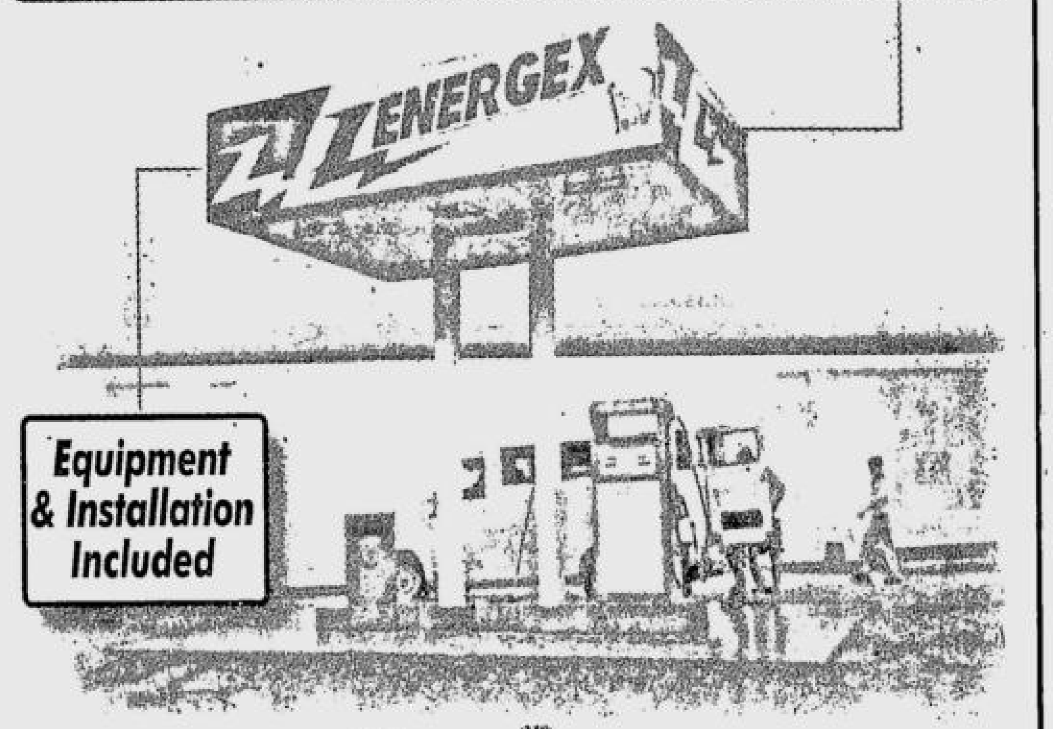
"Faced with this situation, if the Asean countries go their individual ways, they will face more difficulties," Lee was quoted as saying.

Asked if the meeting, which Lee appeared to have dominated, had turned into a "lecture," Cabrera said: "It was a lecture in the sense that he talked about how he felt and how he thought of the problem and because of his demeanor and his character and reputation."

When Ms Macapagal was able to insert a word in edgewise, she talked about her plan to emphasize information communications technology and to boost tourism.

At a meeting with the Filipino community here yesterday, Ms Macapagal appealed to Singapore-based Filipinos to help the country by enticing more Singaporeans to visit the Philippines.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo are welcomed home at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. ROGER MARGALLO



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Ateneo, PLDT to build IT center

THE ATENEO de Manila University will hold the ground-breaking ceremonies of the PLDT Convergent Technologies Center (CTC) tomorrow, Aug. 28, at the Loyola Heights Center.

The CTC, a major building project, is Ateneo's answer to the challenge of fast-paced globalization driven by the cutting-edge information technology. The PLDT and the Ateneo hope to help propel the country to the forefront of this exciting new world.

Bringing the various strengths of the four Loyola Schools under one roof, the CTC will help equip Ateneo students with the skills they need to survive and lead in the global economy.

LACSON PROBE

'We'll continue to hold hearings,' says Barbers

By Christine Avendaño
and Carlito Pablo

THE CHAIRMAN of the lead Senate committee investigating alleged criminal activity by Sen. Panfilo Lacson said yesterday the hearings would go on.

"We will continue to hold the hearings as long as we have a quorum," said Sen. Robert Barbers, chair of the Senate committee on public order and illegal drugs.

Barbers said the next hearing is on Wednesday.

Assistant Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III said the minority coalition has not come up with a position on halting the hearings, as called for by Senators Blas Ople and Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

Ople and Oreta had called for an end to the hearings last week, saying the military had not come up with any solid evidence against Lacson.

Sotto said he personally thought the hearings should continue as long as the (senators) focused on the main objective of the probe and that was to unearth evidence against Lacson.

The charges made by military intelligence that Lacson was behind drug trafficking, kidnap for ransom, smuggling and murder activities are being jointly investigated by Barbers' committee, the committee on national defense and security chaired by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and the blue ribbon committee under Sen. Joker Arroyo.

In a statement, Arroyo, who just returned from a foreign trip and was absent from the last two hearings, said the blue ribbon committee only had a "tertiary role" in the investigation of Lacson.

"Will the blue ribbon committee agree to closing or suspending the hearings?" Arroyo said in the statement. "The blue ribbon committee can make its own decision independent of the lead and secondary committees and adopt a course of action consistent with its mandate under Senate rules."

For his part, the lawyer for one of the witnesses against Lacson, Argee Guevarra, said yesterday there was enough evidence to warrant the expulsion of Lacson from the Senate for criminal acts allegedly committed before he was elected to the chamber.

"We believe there is evidence... to warrant expulsion proceedings... against Lacson," Guevarra said. "Hence, let's proceed with the Senate investigation."

Guevarra said more evidence and witnesses are set to be presented before the Senate hearings against Lacson.

Guevarra is counsel for witness Angelo "Ador" Mawanay, former civilian agent of the special anti-crime group Lacson had headed concurrently with the national police.

Human rights lawyer Arno Sanidad said it won't be necessary to wait for expulsion proceedings if the Supreme Court overturns a recent Court of Appeals decision barring the re-opening of the Kuratong Baleleng case involving Lacson.

"That's murder and there is no bail. If the Supreme Court decides the case can be tried, then Lacson is finished," said Sanidad, who is assisting police witnesses in the Kuratong Baleleng case in which 11 suspected kidnappers were allegedly killed by men under Lacson in 1995.

Sanidad is also the lawyer of Mary "Rosebud" Ong, a former civilian agent in the Lacson-led Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force who has filed a number of kidnapping and murder cases against Lacson and his men.

A picket will be held today in front of the Court of Appeals to protest the decision dropping the Kuratong Baleleng case.

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US cooperating with RP on Ping probe–Malinowski

By Dona S. Pazzibugan

THE UNITED States government is cooperating with Philippine authorities in the investigation of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's alleged money-laundering activities in the US, an embassy official in Manila said yesterday.

But apart from confirming the "government to government cooperation" in the case, US charge d'affaires Michael Malinowski said the embassy would not comment further on what it considers an "internal matter."

"We are in communication. (But) conversations between governments are best kept confidential," Malinowski said.

Malinowski spoke to reporters after rites to mark the centennial of the arrival of the Thomasites, the group of American teachers who founded public education in the country, at the Manila North Cemetery.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Malinowski led other guests in unveiling a centennial marker at the American Teachers' Plot where many Thomasites and their relatives are buried.

National Artist F. Sionil Jose, Fr. James Reuter, the American Association of the Philippines, the Thomasites Descendants Association and Manila public school principals and teachers also attended the hour-long ceremony.

"I don't want to comment on the Lacson case (because) that's an internal matter and that's under Philippine jurisprudence," Malinowski stressed.

Asked about the coordination between the Philippine and US justice departments in the probe, Malinowski said it was "one of the elements... of government to government cooperation. I don't want to break the confidentiality of that."

National Bureau of Investigation director Reynaldo Wycoco said at a Senate hearing last week that a US Federal Bureau of Investigation representative verbally confirmed to him in July that Lacson owned a bank account in California.

Lacson has denied having any US bank account.

Without revealing the amount involved, Wycoco said the FBI representative had also informed him that the account "moved" in July but did not say if the transaction was a withdrawal or a deposit.

Philippine investigators sought assistance from their US counterparts through the RP-US Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty to track down Lacson's alleged million-dollar US bank accounts which were allegedly used for laundering profits from kidnapping, smuggling and bank robberies.

Atienza himself was indirectly dragged into the controversy after he was identified as one of the friends of Kim Wong, whom military intelligence authorities have alleged was Lacson's associate in drug trafficking.

The mayor was careful to appear neutral on the issue. But later he accused his predecessor, Alfredo Lim, of maligning Wong to get back at him.

Atienza described Wong as "a very good friend."

"If he has committed any crime, let us put him in jail. But it should not be because of the accusations of one man. That's just politics," he added in Filipino.

Lim had accused Wong of masterminding the execution last year of Angelito Sy, an "asset" of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, after Sy allegedly got wind of a major drug shipment of Wong's.

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Naia 3 row not over

By TJ Burgonio

THE CONFLICT between a group of airport concessionaires and the operator of the still-to-be-completed but already controversial Ninoy Aquino Airport Terminal 3 is far from being resolved.

The MIA-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso) has agreed to hold talks with the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco) but only if four conditions are met.

Maso is composed of Cargohaus Inc., Dnata-Wings Aviation Sytems Corp., Macroasia-Eurest Catering Services, Macroasia-Ogden Airport Services Corp., the Miascor Group and Philippine Airlines.

Piatco officials said they found the conditions unreasonable and rejected them outright, resulting in an impasse.

Maso lawyer Francis Lim said the conditions were:

- Piatco should divest its shares in the Philippine Airport and Ground Services Inc. (PAGS), which will handle cargo in Naia 3, to preclude conflict of interest and even the playing field.
- Contracts of concessionaires that run beyond December 2002, the date when Naia 3 will begin operating, should be respected.
- The Manila International Airport Authority's regulatory authority over airport rental fees should be retained.
- Philippine Airlines should be given the option to continue operations at the Naia 2 even after Naia 3 opens since its rehabilitation program hinges on a one-terminal operation.

"If Piatco agrees with our conditions, we will sit down and talk. If not, then there's no reason for us to talk," Lim said in a phone interview.

"All these are non-negotiable," added Maso spokesperson Perfecto Yasay Jr., former chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The Maso officials said these issues must be resolved in two weeks, hinting at possible court action.

Piatco lawyer Moises Tolentino said that if the Maso wanted to talk, it should not have set any condition.

"That's not the way to talk. That's not talking. That's dictating. That's twisting arms," he said.

Concerning Piatco's first condition, Tolentino said he saw no reason for Piatco to divest its shares at PAGS before the new terminal starts operations.

"What conflict of interest are they talking about? We joined the bidding because we saw an opportunity to do business," he said in a phone interview.

On Maso's second condition, Tolentino said Piatco would not recognize any concessionaire's contract with the MIAA that extends beyond 2002 simply because the contract was made with the MIAA and not Piatco.

He said the MIAA would have to terminate these contracts because "there will be no more activity in Naia 1 insofar as international flights are concerned."

No Ador retraction, says lawyer

STAR witness Angelo "Ador" Mawanay has not retracted any of his statements or apologized to Sen. Loren Legarda or any senator he has linked to illegal activities.

Mawanay's lawyer, Argee Guevarra, made the assertion after hearing reports his client had retracted or clarified his testimony before the Senate committees investigating Sen. Panfilo Lacson for alleged involvement in criminal activities.

In a phone interview, Guevarra said Mawanay was supposed to have made the retraction at last week's executive session at the Senate.

"Mawanay has not issued any retraction or apologized to Legarda or whatever," he said. Legarda has denied Mawanay's accusation.

Christine Avendaño

BIR opens web page for high-tech taxpayers

SNAKING queues will likely be a thing of the past during tax-paying time with the internal revenue system's adoption of a high-tech system that makes possible the paperless filing of returns and payment of taxes.

Under the Electronic Filing and Payment System recently adopted by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, taxpayers may opt to file their returns, or pay their taxes electronically over the Internet through the BIR web page www.bir.gov.ph.

Under the new system, taxpayers will have the luxury of settling their tax obligations anywhere and anytime they can access the Internet, said the EFPS project director, deputy commissioner Lilian B. Hefti, in a press statement.

The convenience of the new system may even bring in additional revenues because of voluntary taxpayer compliance, she said.

The BIR makes a distinction between e-filing, the process of electronically filing returns through the BIR web page, and e-payment which is done by accessing the internet banking facilities of BIR-accredited agent banks.

EFPS Project Manager Erlinda Simple assured taxpayers that all information filed through the system is "extremely secure."

"EFPS uses the most sophisticated commercially available encryption system to secure all information transferred to and from the taxpayers' computers and the BIR computer system," Simple said.

SSL (secure sockets layer), the industry standard protocol for secure web-based communications, is an integral feature of the EFPS.

Simple said EFPS accounts have a two-level security system through the use of the name/password and challenge question. This will prevent intruders from accessing tax information, she said.

Initially, taxpayers can e-file the following tax returns: withholding tax returns—1601C, 1601E, 1602, 1603; income tax returns—1700, 1702, 1702Q; excise tax returns—2200A, 2200P, 2200T; and value-added and percentage tax returns—2550M, 2550Q, 2551.

According to Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 24-2001, a taxpayer who has a computer, a modem, an e-mail address, an internet account, and is registered with the BIR's integrated tax system, can avail of the program by enrolling online to the EFPS which is linked to the BIR website.

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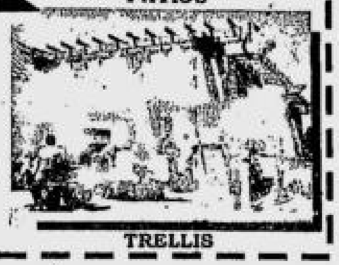

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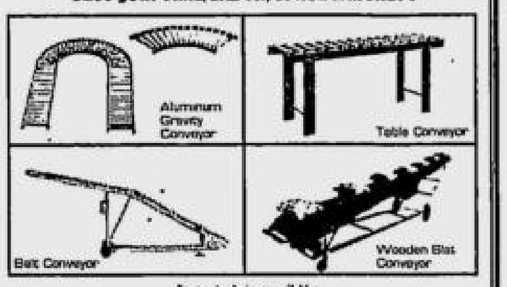

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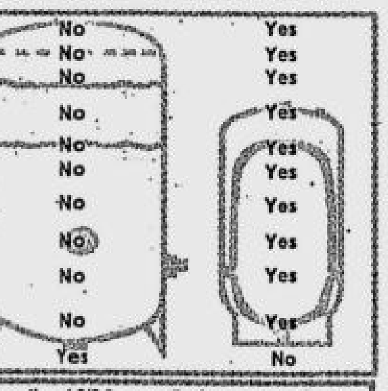

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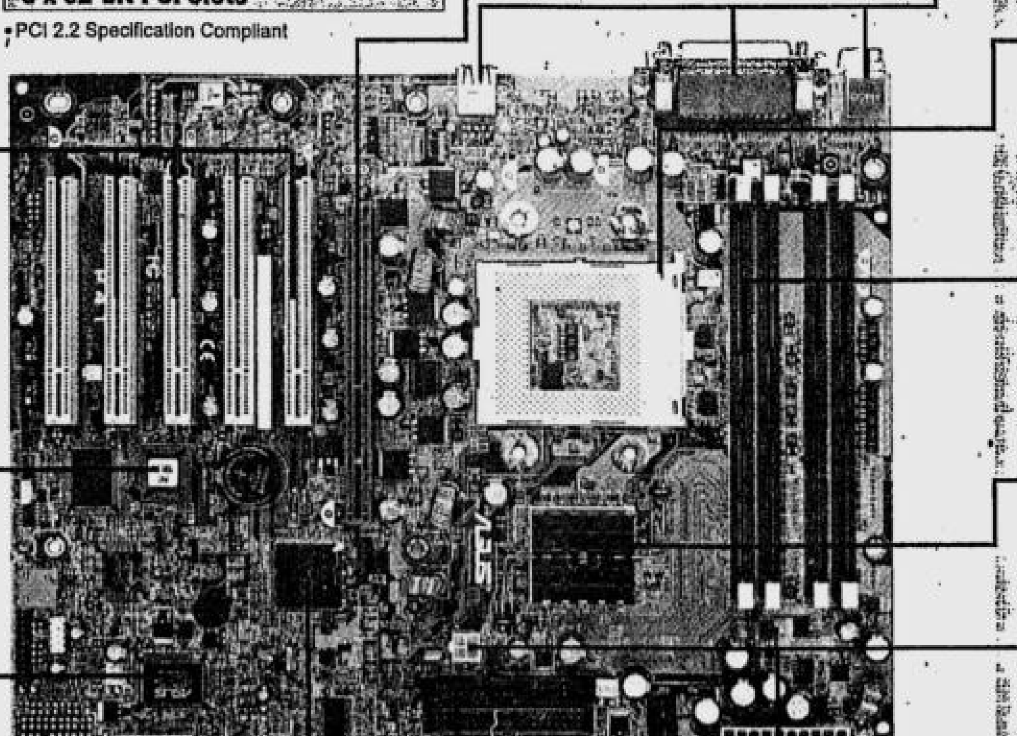

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No appeal

EDITORIAL

AT FIRST glance, the decision of the Court of Appeals to issue a permanent injunction in the Kuratong Baleleng cases is a setback for the government effort to bring former police general and now incumbent Sen. Panfilo Lacson to account for his alleged involvement in organized crime.

On closer inspection, however, we can see that the unappealing decision is a blessing, although we must admit that it comes very well disguised.

The permanent injunction issued by the Special Third Division of the appellate court bars the government from any further prosecution of Lacson and 37 others in connection with the alleged rubout of 11 members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang in 1995. The ruling dismissed 11 complaints on a technicality: the lapse of the two-year prescriptive period for reopening the cases.

Predictably, Malacañang greeted the news with official optimism, saying the Department of Justice will file an appeal with the Supreme Court and expressing confidence that the high court will place "substantive issue" above "procedural matter."

Among those who seek to hale Lacson to court, however, the decision has occasioned a whole lot of Biblical behavior: one can almost hear the wailing and the gnashing of teeth.

The ruling, however, presents two benefits.

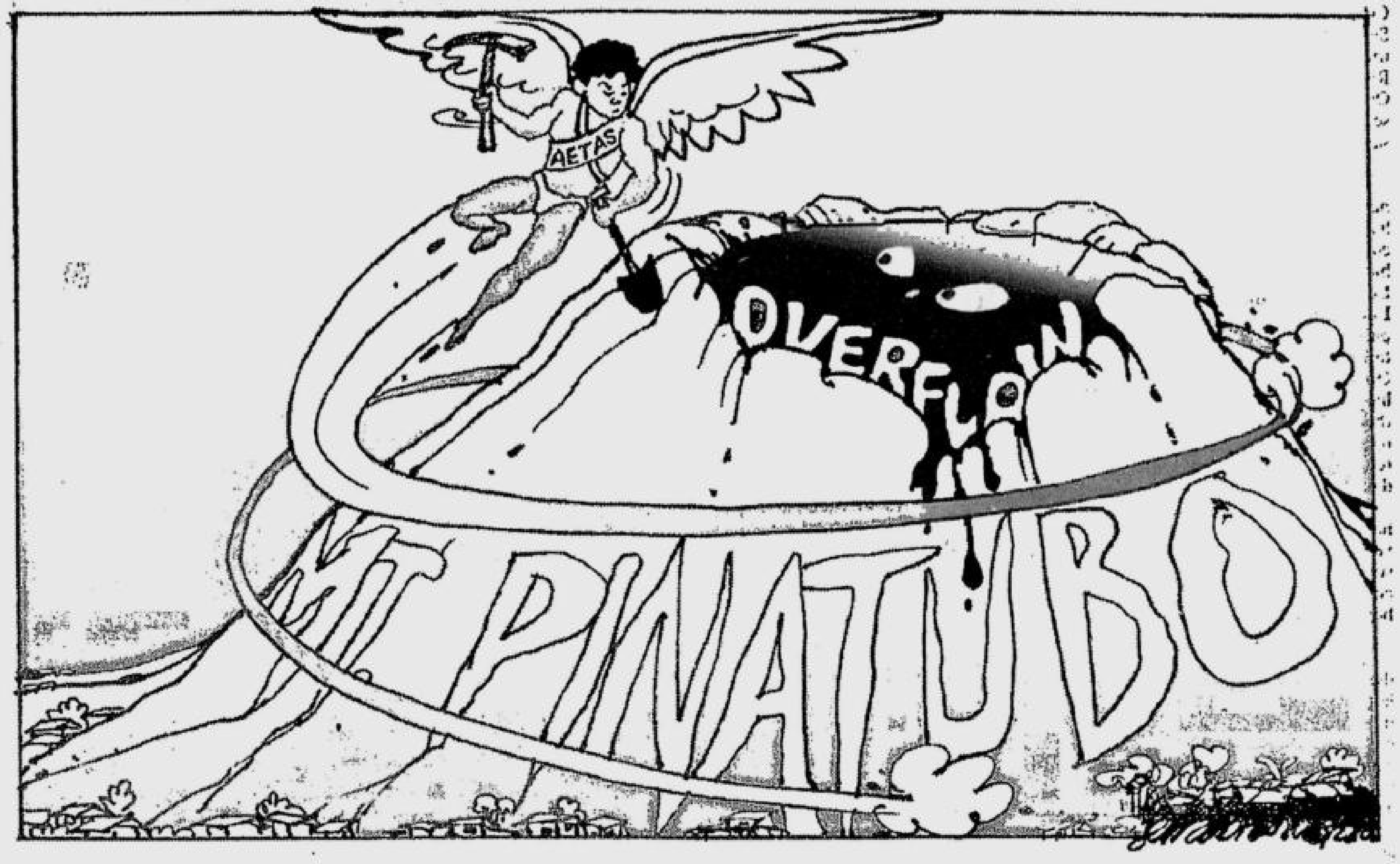
- It allows the three Senate committees hearing the charges aired by military intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus to consider Corpus' evidence on the Kuratong Baleleng rubout. If Corpus is to be believed, Lacson's involvement in the notorious gang is integral to his case. Saying the matter was *sub judice*, Sen. Robert Barbers had convinced the three committees to leave the allegations about the gang out of the scope of inquiry. But at least three of the witnesses Corpus brought to the Senate were ready to testify on Lacson's alleged involvement in the murder of the gang members. The Court of Appeals ruling may allow the Senate a narrow window of opportunity to hear them out.
- It also focuses national attention on the judiciary or, more specifically, on the charmed legal life Lacson appears to be leading. The Ombudsman, after filing the 11 Kuratong Baleleng cases with Lacson listed as a principal in the crime, downgraded the charges against him to that of "a mere accessory" in 1996. In March 1999, after police officer Eduardo de los Reyes, the chief witness, inexplicably issued a statement of retraction, the case against Lacson and 37 others—including Chief Superintendents Francisco Zubia and Jewel Canson and Senior Superintendents Michael Ray Aquino, Cesar Mancao and Glenn Dumlao—were "provisionally" dismissed. The Court of Appeals decision deemed the 11 cases lapsed, because they were "revived" more than two years after their provisional dismissal. It is worth noting, however, that for much of these two years, Lacson was chief of the Philippine National Police.

One question nags at the civil conscience. Won't reviving the old cases or filing new ones place Lacson in double jeopardy?

Associate Justice Buenaventura J. Guerrero, chair of the division and author of the lone dissenting opinion, has the irrefutable answer. Lacson cannot invoke double jeopardy because he "was never arraigned validly before the Sandiganbayan and was never arraigned at all before the Regional Trial Court, Branch 81, of Quezon City."

Society, Guerrero asserts, must strike a balance between the rights of the accused and the duty of the state to prosecute criminal activity. "So far this equilibrium has been maintained throughout petitioner Lacson's encounters with the State on (the) Kuratong Baleleng cases. Though the proceedings and its incidents have dragged on for years, he has never been in peril of trial, much less punishment, for this sensational crime," Guerrero wrote.

Let us repeat that. Though the cases have dragged on for years, Lacson has never even been arraigned. Through an oversight, the Court of Appeals has issued a ruling that all but guarantees that Lacson will never face trial for the Kuratong Baleleng incident. It is now up to the Supreme Court to correct this oversight with its level gaze and legal vision.



Bitter taste in sale of Cosmos to San Miguel

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ALL is not well in the much-ballyhooed sale of Cosmos Bottling Corp. to San Miguel Corp. for P15 billion. Unlike its sweet-tasting product, the sale has left a bitter taste in the mouth of the original owners, the Jaz Cola group of the Visayas, which has now asked the courts to stop the sale. It appears that the Concepcion family of Cosmos Bottling Corp. still owes the Jaz Cola group about P400 million and the government about P261 million in taxes. (Attention: Bureau of Internal Revenue.)

The Jaz Cola group, represented by Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco Jr., is afraid it would not be paid in full because the total debt and other obligations of Cosmos (not including the P400 million balance due to Jaz Cola and the P261 million tax due the government) is more than the sale price. These obligations total P16.039 billion (the tax alone for the Cosmos sale to SMC is P3.9 billion), while the sale price is only P15 billion, or a deficit of P3.559 billion. The unpaid balance to Jaz Cola and the tax due don't appear at all in the list of payables of Cosmos.

Jaz Cola therefore filed petitions for the issuance of a temporary restraining order and therefore a writ of preliminary injunction against the sale of Cosmos to SMC. Last Aug. 24, Executive Judge Monina A. Zanarosa of Quezon City issued the TRO, pending the holding of a special raffle for the assignment of the petition to one of the Quezon City courts.

"There are strong reasons to believe," said Judge Zenarosa, that the defendants are proceeding with the sale of their corporations and properties to SMC. Unless restrained, the sale "would work injustice to the plaintiffs during the pendency of this case and would tend to render any judgment herein nugatory."

How did all these start? On Nov. 8, 1996, the Jaz Cola group signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Cosmos Bottling Corp. for the sale of 10 Visayas-based soft drinks firms in the group for P1.168 billion. These firms were Jaz Cola Phils., Jaz Cola Cebu, Jaz Cola Bacolod, Jaz Cola Iloilo, Pacific Bottlers Phils., Asia Plastiko, Pacific Dairy Queen, Cebu Food and Beverage Resources, Bacolod Food and Beverage Resources, and Iloilo Food and Beverage Resources. The listed buyers were Cosmos Visayas Bottlers and Cosmos Bottling Corp.

The Concepcions, the new owners, are now selling the whole group to food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. for P15 billion. But wait a minute, said the former owners, you still owe us P400 million. Pay us first before you can sell it.

The P1.168 million paid by Cosmos in 1996, said Syjuco, former owner and representative of the group, "is not the total consideration of the sale" agreed upon in the MOA. "This is merely a part of the acquisition cost. (Others include) payment and/or assumption by the defendants of many other obligations including held-back purchase price, leasing payments, reimbursable truck leases, advertising and insurance payments, advance amortization for distributors' trucks, etc. All told, they amount to about P400 million.

Syjuco also said Cosmos failed to pay the correct taxes due to the government amounting to P261 million.

Worse, he said that there are strong indications that the Cosmos group resorted to a sophisticated tax and/or money laundering scheme involving the use of a foreign corporation (Fauna Development Limited) and a foreign tax haven (British Virgin Island) to evade the payment of taxes to the Philippine government.

"We were made an unwitting tool by the defendants in an apparent grand scheme to evade the payment of proper tax due the government by whatever means necessary, whether lawful or not."

These constitute substantial violations of the MOA that would justify its total rescission and abrogation, he said. In effect, that means canceling and nullifying the sale of the Jaz Cola group to Cosmos.

* * *

Still on taxes, the doubling (from 10 percent to 20 percent) of the tax withheld from entertainers and basketball athletes may have been misinterpreted by them. It really sounds scary but it is not an increase in the tax rates. The tax rates remain the same, based on their income during the taxable year. If your income this year is the same as last year, you will pay the same tax.

What will be increased is the tax withheld at source. Because of the huge talent fee for entertainers and basketball players, the taxes withheld from them in the past were not enough to cover the total tax due. So they have to pay the deficiency.

With the doubling of the withholding tax, they will pay less or no deficiency tax. In the end, they pay the same amount. Isn't this better for the taxpayer? No need to scrounge around for money to pay the deficiency tax on tax-paying time.

The negative side of this is that the BIR wants other people to do the tax collecting for them. With the withholding tax, the employers do the collecting for the BIR. The government exerts no effort at all.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: (1) It is not true that Ador Mawanay is the illegitimate son of Peping Cojuangco by Ai-Ai de las Alas.

(2) In his youth, Ador wanted to be a prizefighter, but the coach discouraged him.

He said: "Any which way your opponent swings his fists, he will surely hit your jaw."

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Forward, but carefully

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FIRST off, some words of appreciation. However Col. Victor Corpus' methods leave much to be desired, we must thank him profusely for daring to think something can be done about the rottenness that festers in the land, with help, or direct authorship, of our highest public officials. Indeed, more than daring to think, daring to do something about it.

His optimism is infectious. I followed the Senate hearing last Thursday, and for the first time in many years, I felt, as others must have, that we could actually prosecute and jail criminals in this country, particularly those masquerading as public officials. I felt, as others must have, that we could actually curb, if not stop, crime and corruption in this country.

That hearing marked a psychological change in the public mood, which was palpable despite being subtle. Finally, we put the fear of God, or the law, among criminals in public office. Or at least we rattled their cages. Before this, they could always find comfort in the thought that crime and corruption had become so ingrained in public life we would not know where to begin to untangle it. That was what made them invulnerable, the sheer magnitude and pervasiveness of malfeasance. Now, suddenly, the idea that they could actually be an object of investigation and prosecution was very real. Now, suddenly, they were vulnerable.

That is something we may not ease up on. On the contrary, that is something we should pursue with the doggedness of Jews hunting down the perpetrators of the Holocaust to the ends of the earth. I share Katotohanan's position in this respect. I add my voice to its call to see this investigation through, no matter how long it takes, no matter whom it takes down. I certainly do **not** share Blas Ople's, Tessie Oreta's and Jun Magsaysay's for an end to a Senate inquiry on Ping Lacson on the ground that Lacson's detractors have shown no shred of evidence to justify going on. The evidence may be a little ragged, but it is there. A Senate hearing, as Serge Osmeña kept pointing out is not there to convict—that is a function of the courts—it is there to investigate in aid of legislation. It is there to probe, to plumb, to explore. There is enough reason to there to do so.

Having said this, however, I must also ask Katotohanan, and the other civil society groups, to be just as vigilant, if not more so, about respect for due process. We may not solve one major headache only by creating a bigger one. Specifically, we may not bring down Lacson only by bringing down human rights along with him.

That danger is very real, as Alfredo Lim amply demonstrated last Thursday. A resource person on the anti-drug campaign, he not only played accuser when confronting Kim Wong, he played judge, jury and prospective executioner. Livid at Wong's remark that if he was a drug lord, how come Lim never did a thing about it when he was interior secretary, Lim said he learned about Wong's being so only after he stepped down from public office. Specifically only from the revelations of "Rosebud" last year. "*Suwerte lang nito nakalampas sa akin,*" he said. Which drove Frank Chavez, Wong's lawyer, to expostulate, "Are you threatening my client?"

I do not know whether Wong is lying or not. But I do know that Lim is the former WPD chief, NBI head and interior secretary, who used to paint the houses of suspected drug pushers red and say, when reminded of the rights of the accused, that human rights do not apply to human wrongs. His capacity to accuse, convict, sentence and even carry out the sentence is breathtaking. I do not know what exactly he meant by "*nakalampas sa akin,*" but I do not blame Chavez for taking it to be a very deadly threat. That Lim has been able to get away with these things all these years must say something about the utter pits to which we have consigned decency in the name of running after drug pushers. If vindicating his methods is part of the price of getting Lacson, it is far too steep.

While at this, as Chavez would remark later on, what strange coincidence that Lim, to whose campaign kitty Wong contributed in 1995, should presume Wong to be a drug lord only after Wong threw his support behind Lito Atienza against Lim in the mayoral contest in Manila. But whether that is true or not, civil society and the public itself would do well to insist that due process be strictly followed in an investigation that deals in part with drugs. It's not merely that it isn't so easy to distinguish the criminals from the law enforcers in the anti-drug campaign, it is also that the anti-drug campaign is the favorite platform of fascists, and gives rise to fascist recommendations. The tenor of the Senate hearing when it came to the part about drugs sufficiently shows so. That is something we must guard against.

There is one other thing we must guard against, which is the military intelligence being given the freedom to pry into private lives without checks and balances. While it is good that Corpus has trained his guns on Lacson, it is bothersome that his own superiors should disclaim any knowledge of his activities. It does not raise the specter of "Mission Impossible," it raises the specter of the SS, a group within the military that is more powerful than the rest, whose accountability is only largely to itself. Maybe Corpus is an idealist, maybe he is a crusader, as Malacañang claims he is. That is not a reason to agree to a dangerous practice, or institutionalize an iniquity. Next time, it won't be Lacson, and next time it won't be Corpus. The end is only as good as the means. The right end is never achieved by the wrong means.

We cannot stop a fascist by skirting due process. We cannot stop a wire-tapper by wiretapping him. We cannot dispel a threat to democracy by presuming him guilty until proven innocent.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Brunei beats RP in passing anti-laundering law

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CLAMOR of opposition Senators Teresa Oreta and Blas Ople to terminate the committee hearings on the issues against Sen. Panfilo Lacson, as raised by Col. Victor Corpus, brings to mind once again the Senate impeachment trial, when the pro-Estrada forces tried to do everything to stop the trial from proceeding. Recall how the opposition tried to stop Clarissa Ocampo from testifying, and how they prevented the second envelope from being opened. Now we see the same effort to derail the proceedings.

* * *

Corpus dragged out his surprise witness, Indian national Danny Devnani, who testified on the alleged shady activities of Joseph Estrada and his cohorts. Corpus and former Mayor Alfredo Lim have spoken about the alleged connection between Lacson and suspected drug lord Kim Wong, with Lacson's admitted use of the cell phone owned and paid for by Wong, which, at the very least, ought to be investigated by the Senate ethics committee. On the other hand, NBI Chief Reynaldo Wycoco has revealed that a number of bank accounts in the United States attested to by the FBI as owned by the Lacsons, exist. Yet Oreta and Ople want to terminate the committee hearings for "lack of evidence."

In the minds of many citizens, the evidence on hand is more than enough to warrant a deeper investigation by the Senate, but the same pattern of suppression is evident. To a restive citizenry, the current Senate hearings constitute Round II of what began in the Senate impeachment trial.

* * *

Let's hope that Sen. Nene Pimentel doesn't fall for the line articulated by Oreta and Ople. Our sincere hope is that he would play an active role in the investigation of alleged drug trafficking and other nefarious activities, whose fruits are said to be the bank accounts in foreign banks. Pimentel was quoted as saying that there doesn't seem to be "solid evidence" against Lacson. But he seems to forget that the Senate impeachment trial began with far less evidence than are now available in the anti-drug trafficking issue. The rest of the evidence did not snowball until much later; had the Senate trial been terminated soon after it opened, history would have been very different.

* * *

Moreover, our senators should remember that the US Congress succeeded in cracking down on the collusion between so-called reputable banks in the United States and high-profile political personalities from other countries who were world-class crooks, such as a number of East European embezzlers; Raul Salinas, the elder brother of then President Carlos Salinas of Mexico; Omar Bongo, the president of Gabon, and Asif Ali Zadari, the husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. But it took the US Congress, working on a bipartisan level principally through its investigative arm, the General Auditing Office, years of persistent and fearless hearings, to win a number of major victories against organized crimes and the big-time syndicates. The US Congress members, motivated by patriotism and a grave concern for what was happening to their country, closed ranks against organized crime, humbling hitherto untouchable demi-gods of the financial and banking world.

* * *

Our senators can do no less here against the prospects of narco-politics engulfing the country. But they should not expect to have all the evidence served to them on a silver-platter; there is no such thing, not even for the powerful US Congress, with its awesome resources. US evidence had to be extracted painstakingly from various sources. Oreta, whose behavior in the Senate must be causing her martyred brother to roll in his grave, and Ople have their agenda, but the decent elements in the Senate should fight for the hearings to continue, in order to get to the bottom of the truth. Only the Senate is in a position to do this, especially after the courts have demonstrated in the recent throwing out of the Kuratong Baleleng case on a technicality, that the courts cannot be trusted to do what is right.

* * *

The Kuratong Baleleng case was truly something else: first, the Court of Appeals justices issue an indefinite TRO on this issue that was being followed by the entire nation; the indefinite TRO was a defiance of public opinion. Then, just when the period for the lapse of the TRO was thought to be ending and a decision ought to be forthcoming, the court suddenly rules that the prescriptive period had lapsed and throws out the case for good, on the ground that the deadline for action was not met by the prosecution. Clearly, there was miscarriage of justice in the Court of Appeals' ruling. As a result, it is now thought that the people have no recourse for their hopes of getting to the truth of that case except in the Senate.

* * *

President Macapagal, in her recent visit to Brunei, has asked that tiny kingdom for help in addressing the illegal traffic of funds derived from organized crime. The Brunei government is the right agency to approach. It is true that one or two members of the royal family in Brunei have been accused of living a fabled lifestyle and unbridled spending of oil revenues, but this is now being addressed resolutely, as in the case of the disgraced Prince Jefri. But it should be noted that tiny Brunei is one step ahead of the Philippines in its determination to prevent the kingdom from becoming a haven for dirty money laundering, for it passed the Anti-Money Laundering Act 2000 on July 1, 2000, while our Congress still has to pass its version of that law. Brunei's Anti-Laundering Law prohibits individuals or institutions to indulge in any illegal activities; moreover, this law prohibits any money which resulted from gambling, drugs, prostitution, corruption or other illegal means, from coming into Brunei "and leaving as clean money." Additionally, Sultan Bolkiah's government prohibits money illegally obtained in the country to be allowed to flow into the system and come out as clean money.

* * *

As President Macapagal noted, the income derived from the overseas Filipino workers amounts to US$8 million annually, so that they truly are the overseas Filipino "investors." Of their earnings, the PNB succeeds in luring some $3.6 billion annually, the biggest chunk among the various Filipino banks servicing the millions of OFWs abroad. Of this $3.6 billion, the Brunei PNB brings in about $16 million annually from a large number of the 21,000 OFWs in Brunei, according to PNB branch manager Rod Marcelo (the other two banks operating in Brunei are Far East Bank-Bank of the Philippine Islands and the PCIB-Equitable Bank). As I stressed to Marcelo in Brunei recently, it is important to lure the OFWs' earnings into the banking system, so that our international reserves would be boosted, instead of the dollars ending up deposited by the door-to-door firms abroad. But to entrap those precious dollars, the banks must match the speed whereby the door-to-door pay the OFWs' relatives the needed pesos back home.

Narco-politics and Islamist extremism

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Datu Amir Baraguir

COL. Victor Corpus' raising the possibility of the Philippines turning into another Colombia elicited a variety of responses.

In Muslim Mindanao, it came as no surprise. People here have come to terms with a not-so-distant prospect anymore but a creeping reality of narco-politics in some of its towns and cities, perhaps worse than it is in other parts of the country.

Accustomed to the uncertainty of justice in these parts, they merely wish that they or their children will not end up victims. Not because proof is hard to find. But like Corpus' case they might be inadmissible in court.

Besides, nobody would relish the prospect of detention in the Senate or, worse, as Filipino tabloids would put it, "bathing in one's own blood" for being talkative.

In these parts, narco-politics and Islamist extremism are close cousins.

Those who are in the business of ostentatiously promoting "Islam" and "jihad" are also connected with politics and narcotics. Like their counterparts in Afghanistan, Islamist rebel groups engage in a diabolic mix of religious zeal and callous crime. In such an environment, narco-political executions might even be glorified as Islamic chastisement. This explains the cowardly silence of a populace otherwise noted for courage.

Already wary of the perils that face whistleblowers, the ordinary and often unlearned Muslim is further threatened by the eternal damnation reserved for those who squeal on their brothers. After all, the self-proclaimed guardians of the faith would preach, these brothers are only seeking to "sabotage the government of the Infidel and add to the finances of the holy struggle." And, if they capture government posts in the process, is it not a partial victory of the jihad?

On any day in Marawi or Cotabato City, one has only to mingle with the regular kibitzers in small coffeehouses or stores to have an idea of the relationship between drugs, extremism, and government, terrorism and rebellion. When asked who owns the best and biggest AUVs passing by, the "*istambays*" would name either a local government executive, a rebel commander, an *ustadz* or a trader who is close to any of the above. (At times, many or all these labels point to one and the same person.)

When pressed for more details, they would tell you these expensive vehicles are "*katas ng bato*." In plain English, by-products of the illegal drugs trade.

But, sadly, those who know much don't talk and those who talk don't know much. Perhaps, more than a Corpus is needed.

When Islamist extremism is mentioned, especially by a Muslim, some fellow adherents of Islam feel uneasy, if not outraged. These feelings are further aggravated when the phrase is associated with crimes such as the subjects of Corpus' exposé.

Some non-Muslims also think Islam as a faith is maligned. Which makes them either disturbed or glad, depending on their degree of ecumenism. But it is neither the intention nor the necessary effect of a reasoned critique of what is a real phenomenon which is a product of the modern era.

Is extremism a natural product of Islam? For lack of space, I will treat that question in a future column or article in more detail. But lest casual readers think that the religion preached by Abu Sabaya and an *ulama* who professes membership in the MILF are identical with the Islam of the Qur'an, the Prophet, and the early teachers of the faith, let me quote some lines from Ibn Arabi:

"My heart is open to all the winds:
It is a pasture for gazelles
And a home for Christian monks,
A temple for idols,
The Black Stone of the Mecca pilgrim,
The table of the Torah,
And the book of the Qur'an.
Mine is the religion of love.
Wherever God's Caravans turn,
The religion of love
Shall be my religion
And my faith."

Muhyi-ud-din ibn al-Arabi was a Muslim mystic who lived in Spain between 1165 and 1240. He was praised by later Muslim scholars as the Great Master.

Christian scholars admired him no less. William Chittick, paraphrasing Whitehead's famous remark about Plato, wrote in an article that subsequent to Ibn Arabi, one could say that the history of Islamic thought is but a footnote to his works. While the Qur'an gives Divine prescription, Ibn Arabi's lines exhibit human expression of Islamic tolerance of the highest order.

* * *

Comments to datuamir@hotmail.com

Drilon's dilemma

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

THE SENATE died by its own hands last January, a suicide by obstruction of justice, a damaged institution Sen. Nene Pimentel said he did not want to lead. It cannot be resurrected now by behavior that reminds people of just how that came to pass, which means anything that smacks of trying to hide awful truths.

They can drop the Lacson investigation, circle their wagons and stick their tongues out at the people. But the stench of the Senate's months-old rotting corpse will not go away. Its head may be bobbing up and down; its eyes, glaring; its ears, shut, as usual; its hands gesticulating, its mouths pronouncing preposterous English, its beauty bothered; its committees investigating, its offices humming with the usual business of lawmaking on behalf of lawmakers. But the Senate body, as an institution dedicated to independence and truth, is dead. Only a bunch of dysfunctional senators remain, bickering among themselves, comporting themselves as gods and goddesses, pretending. What the people really see are the worst examples of our race, without humility or common sense, without statesmanship or intelligence, without nobility or compassion, and playing to the imaginary audience of their inconsequential honor.

Even if those who now control the Senate, opposed Erap and the vast criminal enterprise he is accused of running with Sen. Ping Lacson, the TILT! signal on the Senate machine is still on. It cannot be reenergized if all that the old clowns and their new clones want to do is have another pull at the teats of glory. It will implode into irrelevance if people think the senators are only out to protect one of their own (who may also have the goods on them from years of illegal surveillance or collusion).

For all their talk of transparency, over the Senate seems to have descended a midnight sky of secrets and opaque alliances that stand above the people's interests, and are largely impenetrable even to the rambunctious press. If Sen. Franklin Drilon cannot convincingly dispel this growing impression, the Senate and the government may be under perpetual siege and never recover the people's lost faith.

At bottom, the problem is that the people are now deeply suspicious, if not outrightly cynical of the Senate. If the Senate is indeed the future, then we shudder, first in disgust, then in apprehension, then in anger. And thus are we all damaged. We have all seriously underestimated what it will take to rebuild this all-important institution after last January's suicidal act of obstruction of justice at the end of Erap's trial. This much is clear from the Senate's recent atrocious actions, which have invited nothing but scorn and derision from a public weary of behavior.

The challenge lies with the leader. Can Drilon lead this damaged institution out of the wilderness of scorn and derision into which its heedless members, have ridden on their high horses? Only an explicit dedication to discovering truths, no matter how painful for some, over a long period of time, by a stable core of the incumbents, can undo the damage the Senate did to itself, and is continuing to do.

So what should Drilon do with the Lacson investigation? If he gives in to the likes of Senators Blas Ople and Tessie Oreta, who want to end it, he wins brownie points with the opposition but will surely anger the rest of society. If the investigation continues and too many senators make fools of themselves or are sullied by it, he could lose the Senate presidency, perhaps, back to Pimentel, or his old superior, Sen. Ed Angara.

It is a perilous course for the "Big Man," but if he can rise to the occasion, he can rebuild the Senate, not on the sands of individual self-interests, but on the foundation stones of principle and the rule of law. He must not yield to his own natural inclinations, demonstrated over the years, for compromise with his colleagues, just to get along. I think he did that again last week, when he allowed Ador Mawanay's detention, but realized how wrong it was almost immediately and prevailed upon the others to release the hapless witness. Of course that wasn't a difficult act of leadership as Senators Loren Legarda, Pimentel and the lamentable Robert Barbers, realized their blunder soon enough.

But now the moment of true testing has come for Drilon. He is at a fork in the road. Will he walk along the path of least resistance, which is to give in to the cowardly sentiment of his colleagues to just change the subject and go on to other things? Or, taking that mental path less traveled, will he see, that unless the Senate reestablishes a fundamental legitimacy, anything else they do will be meaningless and futile anyway?

Besides, the Senate cannot actually change the subject, since they *are* the subject. The horns of his dilemma will surface to face Drilon at every turn no matter what the issue is, because the real issue is the Senate itself, its character, its role, its essence.

Now is the time to rise to greatness or stay in the gray of mediocrity and be a likeable, yet ineffectual, gentle giant. Stand for the people's ultimate interests now, however you perceive it, your honor, or forever take your place in the bleachers and footnotes of our history. You know darn well that merely throwing this thing to the courts will be a virtual whitewash, for which, that history shall hold you accountable. One of your colleagues stands accused of the most heinous crimes. Not to discover the truth is to mock it, a huge injustice whether Lacson is innocent or guilty. Stake your Senate presidency on whatever your truest convictions are, and show us what you, sir, are really made of.

What is at stake is whether the rule of law can be restored and strengthened and the devastating era of Erap and his henchmen can be finally ended. If people think that deposing him and charging him in court were enough, the continuing disintegration of our society and the suggestion of crimes worse than we could have imagined, prove otherwise.

Interpretation of editorial cartoons

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

EDITORIAL cartoons are meant to provide a humorous touch to the otherwise serious articles that grace the editorial and opinion pages of the INQUIRER. The cartoonists use satire and exaggeration to accomplish this objective.

I thought this idea was clear to the readers until a reader called last week to complain about the Aug. 20 editorial cartoon of the newspaper. The cartoon, drawn by Jess Abrera, is titled "Fire safety violations." It showed a building that bore the name Manor Hotel being engulfed by flames and ghost figures hovering around saying, "*May kasalanan ang* authorities *dito*."

The reader said the cartoon is erroneous; it did not truthfully reflect the front-page news that reported 72 people died from the fire. He counted only 46 ghosts in the cartoon and therefore it was short of 12 ghosts! In his opinion, the omission violates the obligation of the INQUIRER to be accurate and correct in reporting the day's events.

No, the reader was not joking. He sounded serious and concerned about the error he saw in the cartoon. It did not matter to him that the cartoon is not "news" and should be treated instead as an attempt to use humor to convey a message to the readers and government officials responsible for the tragedy. There was no room for distinction for him between news and cartoons.

Some editors chuckled with amusement when I told them about the complaint. They tried to figure out how to fit in 72 ghost images in the cartoon without making it look like a take-off from the "Casper, the friendly ghost" comic strip. Somebody suggested putting cautionary words in the cartoon to the effect that it should not be taken in a literal sense but only figuratively.

I did not bring up this matter to make fun of the reader. The newspaper respects the comments or opinions of its readers about the treatment of news and photos. The fact that the reader went out of his way to call the office (and in the case of others, write letters or send e-mail messages) is reason enough for the newspaper to give his view the consideration it rightfully deserves.

Reminder

For the benefit of the reader and those who may be inclined to adopt a similar approach, it should be underscored that the editorial cartoons and caricatures (including carabao cartoon "Goyito," the registered mascot of the INQUIRER) that often appear in other pages of the newspaper should not be treated as news or factual description of events that happen around us.

Cartoons and caricatures represent the cartoonists' interpretation of the news as they happen and, where appropriate, contain statements that are intended to express their sentiments about the events in question or the personalities involved. Such statements however do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial staff of the newspaper.

Still on the subject of cartoons, the Opinion section editor mentioned in the course of the discussion of the reader's complaint that the editorial cartoons are studied closely by some readers for a unique purpose—to find clues they can use to place bets in gambling activities.

According to the editor, some Mindanao-based readers who engage in the illegal numbers game called *masiao*, think the INQUIRER's editorial cartoons contain clues or tell-tale signs that can give them the winning combinations in that game. In the same manner that they "interpret" dreams, license plates and other incidents in daily life as guideposts in determining the numbers that will bring them the jackpot.

He recalled getting calls from these readers asking him to reveal the clues hidden in the editorial cartoons with a promise to share the winnings with him if they win the major prize. In an effort to convince him to share that secret, one reader said his daughter has to undergo a delicate operation and he needed a substantial sum of money to defray the expenses of that operation. Another claimed he had been jobless for a long time and that the jackpot price he might win would be a big help to his family.

The editor explained that if there is any truth to the belief of some readers that the editorial cartoons contain information that can lead to the big prizes in any numbers game, the editors would have taken advantage of those clues, grabbed the money and retired from the tedious task of putting out a daily newspaper.

Through this column, the editor would like to inform the readers who treat the editorial cartoons as "crystal balls" to guide their gambling instinct that they do not contain clues or signs that represent or may be interpreted as messages from somewhere on what numbers will win in any numbers game, both legal and illegal.

Filipino-Chinese

Reacting to my article last week about the correct description of Filipinos with Chinese parentage, William Tang, chair of the United Chipino Brotherhood International, wrote: "We would like to be called, Chinese-Filipino or CHIPINO. Our loyalty is to our country of birth, the Philippines. What we only want is to be given RESPECT, PEACE OF MIND and GENUINE BROTHERHOOD with our Filipino brothers.

"Our group must not be confused with the subservient Chinese of yesteryears. Chinese who were often used and abused. Blamed inwardly for almost everything that do not turn out right. Like it is okay to hold up, kidnap, *gatasan* and *utu-utuin*. NEVER and we shall say never again!"

The suggestion makes sense. Instead of Chinoy, which phonetically gives emphasis to the Chinese side of the Filipino concerned, Chipino exudes a certain ring that stresses the Filipino side of the citizenship that should be the case in the first place.

Incidentally, the Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc., a non-government organization dedicated to promoting harmonious relations between Chinese and Filipinos, marked its 14th anniversary yesterday. Echoing the theme of its newsletter, Kaisa has lived up to its commitment to be a "bridge of understanding between two cultures; a bridge of tolerance between two ages."

The organization operates the Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center at Intramuros, Manila, which showcases the role the Chinese has played in the development of our country.

Those interested in knowing more about our Chipino brothers should take time to see the interesting displays and informative materials at the Kaisa Center.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Tribute to Ninoy

"He never surrendered his principle as he led the opposition in fighting for freedom, steadfast in his convictions even in the face of certain death."

—Former Sen. Neptali Gonzales Jr. on Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

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Metro Manila's unsolvable floods

EVERY year, with the onset of the rainy season, Metro Manila is subjected to floods several times, and every year, the government announces a multibillion-peso budget for flood control. This money literally goes down the drain because, whether it is spent correctly or wrongly, the problem is unsolvable. There is no solution to the annual flooding of portions of Metro Manila. We just have to live with it, year in and year out. Allow me to explain why this is so.

Imagine the lay of the land in and around Manila during the time of Rajah Soliman, when the people lived in huts, when there were no roads, bridges and buildings made of concrete. People then had to live in conformity with nature and the elements—typhoons and heavy rainfall. The land was bisected by rivers, streams and creeks, all of them designed by nature to drain the land quickly and fully. The *esteros*, as we call these natural drainage canals now, were navigable by fairly large vessels.

But that was then. Now it is totally different. The pressure of an increasing population and the invention of concrete have conspired to eliminate and reduce the size and volume of the natural drainage that nature has provided, thus the floods. Rain can no longer seep into the ground because it is covered by concrete. The normal volume of water that a creek can hold and carry to the sea has been reduced by illegal reclamation and buildings along its banks. Add to this, an even greater reduction of every *estero's* capacity by siltation and pollution (garbage illegally thrown into it, so that one can literally walk on the garbage without getting wet).

How many small rivulets and creeks have disappeared, been covered up, narrowed or replaced by inadequate culverts? For this is the real cause of the annual flooding of Metro Manila. For every liter reduction in the volume of the natural drainage, add one liter to the water that contributes to the flooding problem.

And then there is the asphalt that the Department of Public Works and Highways and other government agencies probably use by the thousands of tons every year in fixing, patching up and asphalting the public roads in Metro Manila. Notice how quickly they "melt" at the first rainfall. And then the same pothole is patched up again. And then it disappears again. This happens several times in a year. Where do all these asphalt end up? They all end up in the already inadequate drainage system.

Global warming is also upon us. The melting of the ice sheets in the north and south polar regions is slowly raising the level of the seas. This will affect us, especially the low-lying areas of Navotas, Malabon all the way to Valenzuela. For these places are the flood plains of the Pampanga River and all the other rivers and tributaries that drain Central Luzon. As the sea level rises, the time will soon come when the inhabitants of these places will be walking in water 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The budget allocation for the yearly flood control program is a waste of people's money. Let it be used for something else. For low-cost housing, for example. This would reduce the money that goes into some politicians' pockets.

The floods will always be with us Metro Manilans. Let us live with it.—**DOMINADOR C. UY, 114 B Gonzalez St., Xavierville, Quezon City**

Who are sending threats to councilor?

THIS is in reference to insinuations that the proponents of the Paref-Northfield School have been sending threatening text messages to a Quezon City councilor.

I am a Paref-Northfield parent and I know the people referred to. They are among the most decent, cool-headed, well-mannered people I know—everything educated people are supposed to be.

To prove this point, last July 12, 2000, I was at a meeting between the Coha (Coalition of Homeowners Associations) and members of the Paref-Northfield School Board, parents and supportive residents of nearby villages. Without provocation, a Coha member pointed a finger at the members of the school board, accusing them of lying about the non-sectarian nature of the school and proceeded to mock the prayer of the Northfield students for their school's permanent site. Another one questioned the social status of the school board members in attendance, saying, "We were expecting the higher-ups to come to this meeting. Obviously you're not!" Still, another cut short the opening statements of a school board member and never allowed him to continue.

All through the insults and false accusations hurled at them, the school board members maintained their composure, bearing everything with patience and humility. They are hardly the type to send death threats or engage in anomalous deals to put up a school.—**CATHERINE C. LANZONA, 126 Katipunan Ave., White Plains, Quezon City**

End of a long, dark night

LETTERS

WHEN Amando Doronila starts to call people power a "counterfeit revolution" (PDI, 8/17/01), I strongly feel the need to explain to myself (and to many others who were also witnesses to the martial law period) how a respected journalist and political analyst could make such blistering comment.

I recall what former University of the Philippines president Salvador Lopez said about the press at the onset of martial law: "There are now two kinds of newspapermen—those who lie low and those who lie." The people Doronila mentioned, like Satur Ocampo and Tony Zumel, did neither of those things. They went underground to organize the masses.

The 10 years when Doronila was absent from the country between 1975 and 1985 were characterized by widespread underground resistance to the rising dictatorship. Filipino exiles abroad like Doronila kept in touch by reading what they could take hold of in Australia (or in the United States) about what was happening in the country. What he missed was the 24-hour organizing work in the different progressive sectors and the mobilization of the masses resisting Marcos during those 10 years. NGOs and people's organizations united thousands of Filipinos under the influence of the National Democratic Front (without being a communist or anti-communist, mind you), but those who were in Manila were unaware of the massive organizing in the countryside because they were too focused on Edsa I. They thought that Edsa I was the beginning of the People Power Revolution, but it was actually its culmination.

This manner of viewing of Edsa I, triggered by Ninoy Aquino's assassination, as a start instead of as an end, puts aside the manifold socio-economic-political antecedents that made people suffer under the Marcos dictatorship. If Doronila ignored these factors as he seemed to have done, then he can blame no one but himself. He can call people power, especially Edsa I, a counterfeit revolution only if he takes it as the start of a new day, when it was actually the end of a long dark night.

A proper tribute for the late Tony Zumel and Ninoy Aquino is to recognize their part in the climax called people power in 1986, and for Satur Ocampo by recognizing the massive support from the masses (proof of which is his topping the party-list election for Congress) and for continuing the fight in another arena. Let us not forget the hundreds other journalists today who "neither lie nor lie low" but continue to fight to save democracy from the hands of the elite in all the people power direct actions thereafter.—**RAUL E. SEGOVIA, 2864-C Zamora St., Pasay City**

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Justice Leonor Ines-Luciano

Justice Ines-Luciano, 82 years old, is a champion of the poor and the oppressed, rendering pro bono legal services particularly to youth offenders and women victims of injustices. She founded several service-oriented organizations, among which are Molave Youth Home, Youth Offender Network, the Quezon City Lingap Kabataan Center, Tanglaw Village I and II and first Women's Development Resource Center. All these are geared towards giving poor Filipinos a chance to regain their dignity and self-worth as human beings.

Most Rev. Charles van den Ouwelant, MSC

Most Rev. Charles van den Ouwelant, MSC, 90 years old, has dedicated his life to serving the poorest of the poor in Mindanao, notably the Lumads. He founded "A Chance for the Poor Foundation, Inc." which carries out his medical apostolate for indigenous people, a mission he started in Davao City in 1974. Indigent patients are provided with free medical and hospitalization services at local hospitals which support the Bishop's apostolate work. He successfully mobilized local bus companies to give free transportation to indigent patients seeking medical treatment and hospitalization. Hundreds of indigent patients have benefited from Bishop Ouwelant's foundation.

Congratulations!

Motorcyclists on tollways must obey rules

THIS refers Al S. Mendoza's "Full Tank" column titled, "Motorcyclists have as much right as other motorists" (PDI, 8/2/01), on the recent court decision that invalidated the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) guidelines that would ban motorcycles from using or having access to our tollways.

We have noted the comments and observations of Mendoza on the issue and his recommendation on the compulsory safety requirements for motorcyclists when traveling the expressways.

We would like to inform and assure Mendoza that the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) and the Skyway Corp., will strictly enforce the guidelines as specified in the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Order No. 123 which allows motorcycles to operate inside toll roads and limited access highways.

At the same time, the PNCC has its own guidelines to ensure that motorcyclists who will be using the tollways comply with the DPWH order for the safety and convenience of all tollway users, not just the motorcyclists.

We are issuing stickers and IDs to those who comply with the DPWH guidelines. The stickers and IDs serve as easy identification of motorcycles which have an engine displacement of at least 400 cubic centimeters (cc), as required in the order.

To make certain that the restrictions are properly followed, motorcycles without stickers will be subjected to inspection before entering the tollways. Therefore, in order to avoid unnecessary delays and inconvenience, we have encourage motorcyclists to register with the PNCC on Aug. 11.

I agree with Mendoza that motorcyclists have as much of a right as other motorists and I know that they have been waiting for this moment for quite some time. Now that the time has finally arrived, I enjoin them to be responsible motorists by adhering to the DPWH guidelines and complying with regulations prescribed by the tollway operator particularly the use of safety gadgets (i.e. helmets, etc.) and abiding with the prescribed rules (i.e. no sidecars, no lane splitting, only one backrider, required speed limits, etc.) for the safety and convenience of everyone.

I would like to assure Mendoza that we will continue to provide all the safety regulations necessary to keep the motoring public, the motorcyclists and the rest of our users, safe while using the tollways.—**LUIS F. SISON, chair and CEO, Philippine National Construction Corp., Edsa cor. Reliance Street, Mandaluyong City**

PVAO benefits awaited

I AM the wife of a pensioner of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office. I have filed all papers needed to have the pension transferred to me and to claim the burial benefits of my husband, Protacio S. Luna, who passed away on April 10, 2000. I feel that its high time some action was taken on this request.

I've been to the PVAO office and I've seen wives and veterans, far advanced in age, waiting to receive the benefits they were promised. I pray that I will not suffer the same fate.—**NATIVIDAD L. LUNA, 33 Crystal St., Twinriver Subd., Parang, Marikina City**

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Israeli F-16s hit 4 Gaza towns

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—In retaliation for the killing of five Israelis by Palestinian militants, Israeli F-16 warplanes and tanks demolished police buildings in four Palestinian towns early Sunday. One Palestinian was killed and 18 injured in the raids.

One of the air strikes leveled a four-story building in the Gaza City police headquarters. The missiles set off a thundering explosion and sent plumes of black smoke into the air.

At least a half-dozen Israeli helicopters hovered near Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Gaza City, but eventually left without firing.

Arafat has been away for several days, traveling in Asia.

The latest escalation made a resumption of truce talks an increasingly remote possibility. Last week, Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said they were ready to meet, but never set a time and place.

With five Israelis killed Saturday, it was one of the bloodiest days for Israel in 11 months of fighting with the Palestinians.

Among the victims were an Israeli couple driving on the edge of the West Bank and three soldiers killed when two Palestinian militants infiltrated an isolated army post and opened fire.

Israel usually targets Palestinian security installations in its retaliatory strikes because it holds Arafat ultimately responsible for attacks on Israelis.

Israel says Arafat's security forces do little to rein in the militants, and sometimes participate in attacks on Israelis.

"Whether attacking Israeli soldiers in Gaza or attacking Israeli civilians on roads near Jerusalem, Yasser Arafat is escalating his war of terrorism against the state of Israel," Israeli government spokesperson Dore Gold said.

The Palestinian police chief in Gaza, Brig. Gen. Ghazi Jabali, said his men were "soldiers who will fight to the end in our just battle."

Tayeb Abdel Rahim, a senior aid to Arafat, said, "The occupation may succeed in knocking down our houses and our offices, but it cannot destroy the determination of our people, and such an aggression will increase the feeling of hatred and will break the bridge of trust between the two peoples."

The events began before dawn Saturday with the assault on the isolated Marganit army base in Gaza.

The Palestinian attackers climbed over separate embankments, breaking into the isolated the base. Both began shooting and throwing grenades at soldiers, the Israeli army said. Three soldiers, including a major, were killed, and seven wounded.

Soldiers shot back, killing one Palestinian at the base. The second man managed to flee, but was pursued and shot dead about four hours later while attempting to take cover at a greenhouse in a nearby Jewish settlement, the army added.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a small radical PLO faction, claimed responsibility.

Palestinian militants have targeted Israeli troops and Jewish settlers in Gaza throughout the current conflict. However, in most cases, the militants have fired from a distance, or attempted roadside ambushes.

On Saturday evening, Palestinian gunmen ambushed an Israeli car on a road near the West Bank, killing an Israeli couple. The woman's brother was critically wounded with a shot to the head, and the couple's two children, ages 1 and 2, were lightly hurt.

The Al Aqsa Brigade, a group of gunmen linked to Arafat's Fatah movement, claimed responsibility for the deadly ambush.

The first Israeli strike came Saturday night, targeting the town of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israeli troops briefly took over several small Palestinian security outposts, and army bulldozers tore down the headquarters of Palestinian Public Security, according to residents and Rafah's Governor, Majid al-Ajha. *AP*

'Wild child' weds Norway crown prince

THE BISHOP of Oslo, Gunmar Stalsett, performs the wedding ceremony of Norway's Crown Prince Haakon and Mette-Marit Tjessem Hoiby at the Oslo Cathedral Aug. 25. AP

OSLO—Norway's Crown Prince Haakon married a single mother and self-confessed "wild child" here Saturday in a solemn ceremony attended by royalty from throughout Europe that many Norwegians hailed as a modern-day Cinderella story.

Standing before Britain's Prince Charles, King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and numerous other European kings, queens, princes and princesses, Prince Haakon exchanged vows and simple white gold rings with Mette-Marit Tjessem Hoeiby in Oslo Cathedral.

With thousands of cheering spectators waving flags and flowers and shouting their support from behind police barricades, the new couple afterwards made their way in a limousine down Oslo's main artery where many shops displayed their portraits to the palace for a sumptuous wedding banquet.

Despite Tjessem Hoeiby's admission of having lived a "dissolute" life in the past—the father of her son has several convictions on drugs and violence charges—the atmosphere in Oslo Saturday was festive and Norwegians seemed in a forgiving mood.

"We are here to show that we support the monarchy and that the people approve of this marriage," said Marianne Soerestrandoeye, a 17-year-old high school student who waited all day outside the cathedral under cloudy skies and intermittent drizzle to watch the procession after the wedding.

With the crown prince dressed in ceremonial uniform and Tjessem Hoeiby in an elegant white gown with a two-meter train, the wedding was at once as rich in ancient pageantry and as it was in modern-day irony surrounding Europe's latest royal union.

The decision of Prince Haakon, 28, to wed a commoner, and one with a controversial background, inspired many comparisons with the story of Cinderella.

Tjessem Hoeiby confessed during a packed news conference on Wednesday, frequently on the verge of tears, that her youth was very unorthodox for a future sovereign.

It contrasted sharply with the prince's own conventional upbringing, his academic success at the University of California at Berkeley and Oslo University, and his contributions to Norwegian diplomacy at the United Nations in New York.

The royal bride, born in Kristiansand, Aug. 19, 1973, said she had led a dissolute life as a young woman.

"My adolescent rebellion was more pronounced than for many people, and at that time I wanted to set myself up against whatever was generally accepted by society at large. I have lived a dissolute life," she said at the news conference.

The fact that the royal bride had a 4-year-old son born out of wedlock was not considered shocking in itself in a nation where more than 50 percent of children had similar origins.

However, her former partner—the father of her child—was sentenced for possession of cocaine on several occasions, as well as for being violent while drunk.

That apart, like many young Norwegian women of her generation, the princess-to-be has a curriculum vitae that consists of having followed numerous courses without gaining a diploma, and of working around the world in temporary jobs.

She picked strawberries, was a grocery shop assistant, studied at Wangaretta University in Australia, and also attended evening courses in engineering and construction.

The tall, blonde, Nordic beauty has managed to win over many of her generation, and some of the media, with her frankness and honesty. She also took the opportunity when unburdening herself about her past of denouncing drug use. *AFP*

LISBON AIRPORT

Airbus makes 'miracle' landing on dead engines

LISBON—Passengers from a Canadian charter airliner forced to make an emergency landing without engines called the landing a miracle after they finally arrived in Lisbon on Saturday, television reported.

Arriving at their final destination on an early morning flight from the remote Azores islands, passengers from aborted Air Transat Flight 236 were greeted by relieved friends and relatives at Lisbon's airport.

Passenger Renato Marcelino told SIC TV the last half hour before Friday's emergency landing was "brutal, it was horrible, it was everything you could imagine."

Marcelino said many of the passengers, already with life vests on, began shouting and praying as the Airbus A330-200 lost altitude over the Atlantic and the two Rolls-Royce engines went on and off.

"We all got in position to crash, the attendants began to shout, 'Hold on' and things like that. (Then) people at the windows began to say, 'Land, we see land.' It was the base.

"The pilot was extraordinary. I don't know how he was able to do it in the last five minutes without engines. He told us we were going to have to land in the water."

Maria Joao, another passenger, said: "It was a miracle."

The Airbus, with 304 passengers and crew aboard, glided into Lajes airport in the Azores, about 1,450 km west of Portugal.

The aircraft was on a flight from Toronto to Lisbon and authorities suspect it had fuel problems. Eleven passengers were hurt, none seriously.

Portuguese aviation officials are heading the inquiry into the incident. A spokesperson for the National Civil Aviation Institute said its technicians had arrived in the Azores as part of the probe.

Canada's Transport Ministry and the Canadian Transportation Safety Board are also contributing investigators. Montreal-based Air Transat is Canada's biggest charter airline, and the ministry has required its three Airbus 330s to operate closer to airports on long routes.

The aircraft's tires blew out and caught fire in the landing and the aircraft's undercarriage was damaged, leaving the plane immobilized.

Jorge Silva, the assistant airfield manager, said the field would likely be closed until Sunday because the plane needed repairs to be moved. The field is part of a US-Portuguese military base that also handles civilian flights. *Reuters*

Colombia police haul in $35M in drug money

BOGOTA—In a joint US-Colombian operation, police discovered $35 million in two upscale apartments being used as banks by a top cocaine-trafficking organization—one of the largest seizures ever of drug money, officials said Saturday.

The money was found packed in more than 300 bundles of $100,000 each. The bundles were wrapped in plastic and stashed in boxes. The cash, in denominations of $20s, $50s and $100s, was displayed at a news conference Saturday at national police headquarters in Bogota.

The commander of the Colombian national police, Gen. Ernesto Gilibert, said the apartments where the money was found Friday were used as "private banks" by the North Valley Cartel, a major Colombian cocaine smuggling operation.

In Washington, US Customs spokesperson Dean Boyd said it was "one of the largest single seizures of US currency ever."

Fifteen million dollars were hidden behind a bathroom wall in one apartment in northern Bogota and $20 million was found packed behind a kitchen wall in the other apartment, officials said.

One person was detained during the raids, but was not identified in order to pursue other leads.

At the Bogota news conference, US Ambassador Anne Patterson and Gilibert congratulated each other on the operation, in which the DEA and Colombian police participated.

"Every time we trail international criminals, the DEA plays an important role," Gilibert said.

The seizures came after Wednesday's arrest of Felix Chitiva Carrasquilla, considered one of the top men in the North Valley Cartel, which operates out of the southern state of Cauca.

Chitiva, arrested in Cali, 300 km southwest of Bogota, is wanted on two warrants in federal court in Florida, one of which stems from a drug trafficking case from the early 1990s, a US official said on condition of customary anonymity.

Colombian police say Chitiva was responsible for a 10-ton shipment of cocaine seized in Venezuela a year ago. It was seized as part of an investigation, dubbed Operation Journey, which resulted in the seizure of about 25 tons of cocaine and the arrests of 43 people worldwide. *AP*

R&B singer Aaliyah, 7 others killed in Bahamas plane crash

AALIYAH

MARSH HARBOUR, Bahamas—R&B singer and actress Aaliyah died along with seven others when a small plane that was to carry them back to the United States crashed after takeoff in the Bahamas, authorities said.

The 22-year-old artist was among nine on board the twin-engine Cessna and had come to the Bahamas to shoot a music video, officials said. One critically injured survivor of Saturday's crash was flown to Florida for treatment, authorities said.

"We find it devastating and most unfortunate that after having this world-famous star Aaliyah and her crew select the Bahamas as their choice location for her latest video, the project has climaxed on such a tragic note," said Minister of Tourism Tommy Turnquest, who happened to be visiting Abaco Island, where the plane went down.

Aaliyah, of Detroit, was to begin shooting the video for "Rock The Boat" this month in Miami, according to her Web site. It was not clear whether she filmed that video while in the Bahamas.

The singer was born Aaliyah Haughton on Jan. 16, 1979 in New York. She began performing at the young age of 11 when she sang on stage with Gladys Knight's troupe in Las Vegas. Her first album, "Age Ain't Nothing But A Number," came out when she was 15 years old. She has collaborated with R&B singer R. Kelly, who produced her debut album and wrote many of the songs that appeared on it.

By age 18, Aaliyah had two hit records to her name.

Aaliyah's song "Try Again" earned her a Grammy nomination this year for best female R&B vocalist. She made her feature acting debut in the film "Romeo Must Die." She also had signed on to appear in two sequels to the high-tech thriller "The Matrix."

"She was like one of my daughters, she was one of the sweetest girls in the world," said Grammy-winning producer, arranger and composer Quincy Jones. "She vacationed with me and my family together in Fiji. I loved her and respected her and I am absolutely devastated."

Bahamian police Superintendent Basil Rahming said the other passengers killed included Scott Gallin, 41; Keith Wallace, 49, of Los Angeles; Douglas Kratz, 28, a representative for Virgin Records and Eric Foreman, 29, both of Hollywood, Ca.; Gina Smith, 29, of New Jersey; and Christopher Maldonado, 32, of New York. The plane's pilot, identified only as L. Marael, also died.

The survivor was identified by police as Anthony Dodd, 34, of Los Angeles. *AP*

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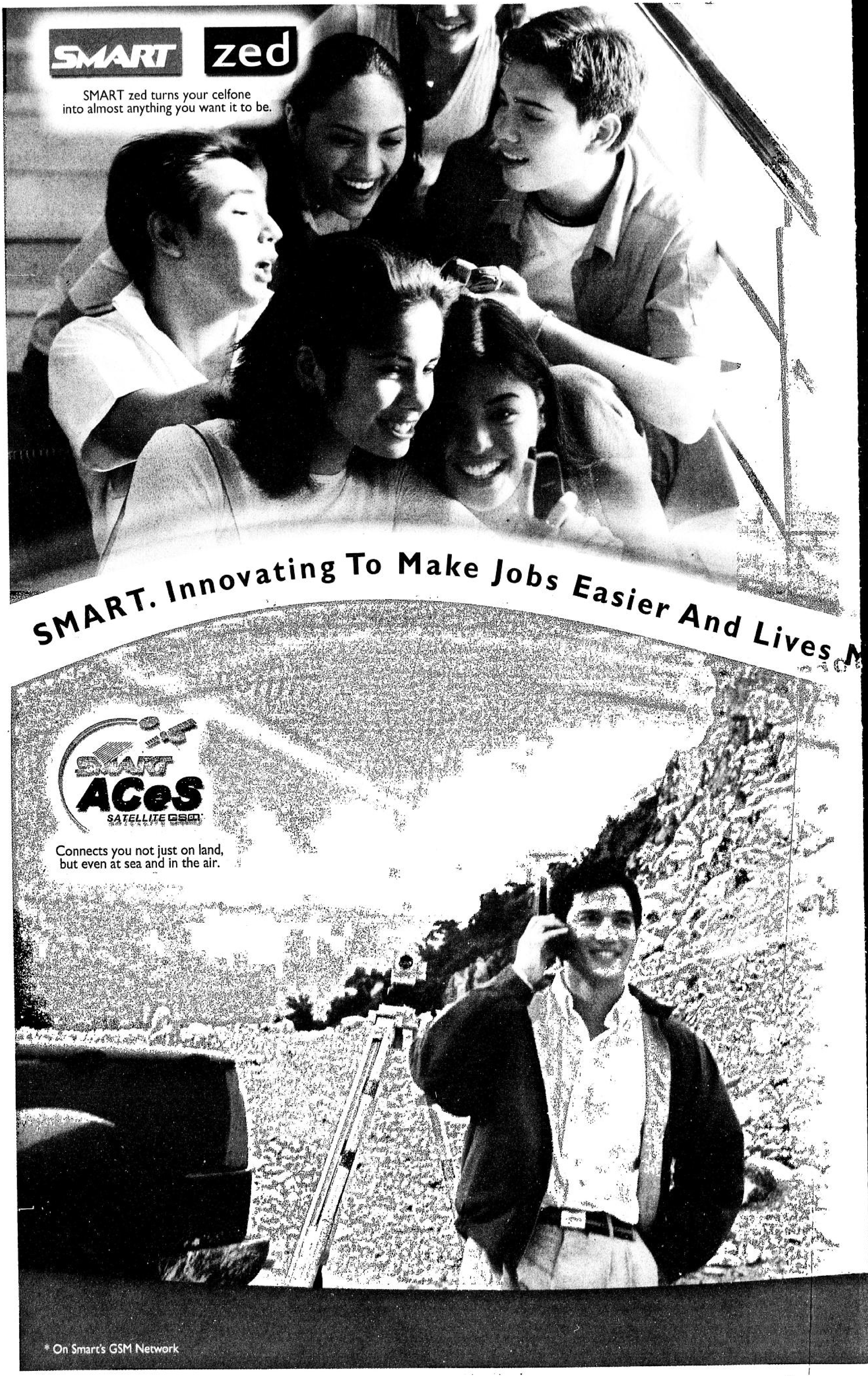
Synopsis of Annual Statement
As of 31 December 2000

ADMITTED ASSETS		
Bonds		P 158,673,341.07
Treasury Bills		199,986,090.29
Policy Loans		50,103.57
Security Fund		141,244.00
Cash on Hand and in Banks		81,908,085.98
Amounts Due from Ceding Companies		575,550,732.00
Net Life Insurance Premiums and Annuity Considerations Due and Uncollected		1,054,211.76
EDP Equipment		13,676,355.50
Accrued Investment Income		5,311,934.67
Other Admitted Assets		2,633,719.25
TOTAL ADMITTED ASSETS		P 1,038,985,818.09
LIABILITIES		
Aggregate Reserve for Life Policies and Contracts		P 9,377,006.23
Policy and Contract Claims		1,825,995.23
Amounts Due to Accepting Companies		888,879.89
Premium and Annuity Considerations Received in Advance		1,709,176.99
Commissions Payable		6,000,272.68
Taxes Payable		4,790,625.76
Account/Notes Payable		859,236.04
Accrued Expenses		87,453,371.54
Unearned Bond Discount		6,171,453.88
Due to Home Office		40,678,810.44
Other Liabilities		8,694,078.96
TOTAL LIABILITIES		P 168,448,907.64
STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Capital Stock Paid-up	P 250,000,000.00	
Special Surplus Fund:		
Fluctuation Reserve-Foreign Exchange	37;175.38	
Contributed Surplus	50,000,000.00	
Contingency Surplus	541,312,193.10	
Retained Earnings	29,187,541.97	
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		P 870,536,910.45
TOTAL LIABILITIES & STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		P 1,038,985,818.09

(This Synopsis, prepared from the 2000 Annual Statement, approved by the Insurance Commissioner, is published pursuant to section 225 of the Insurance Code.)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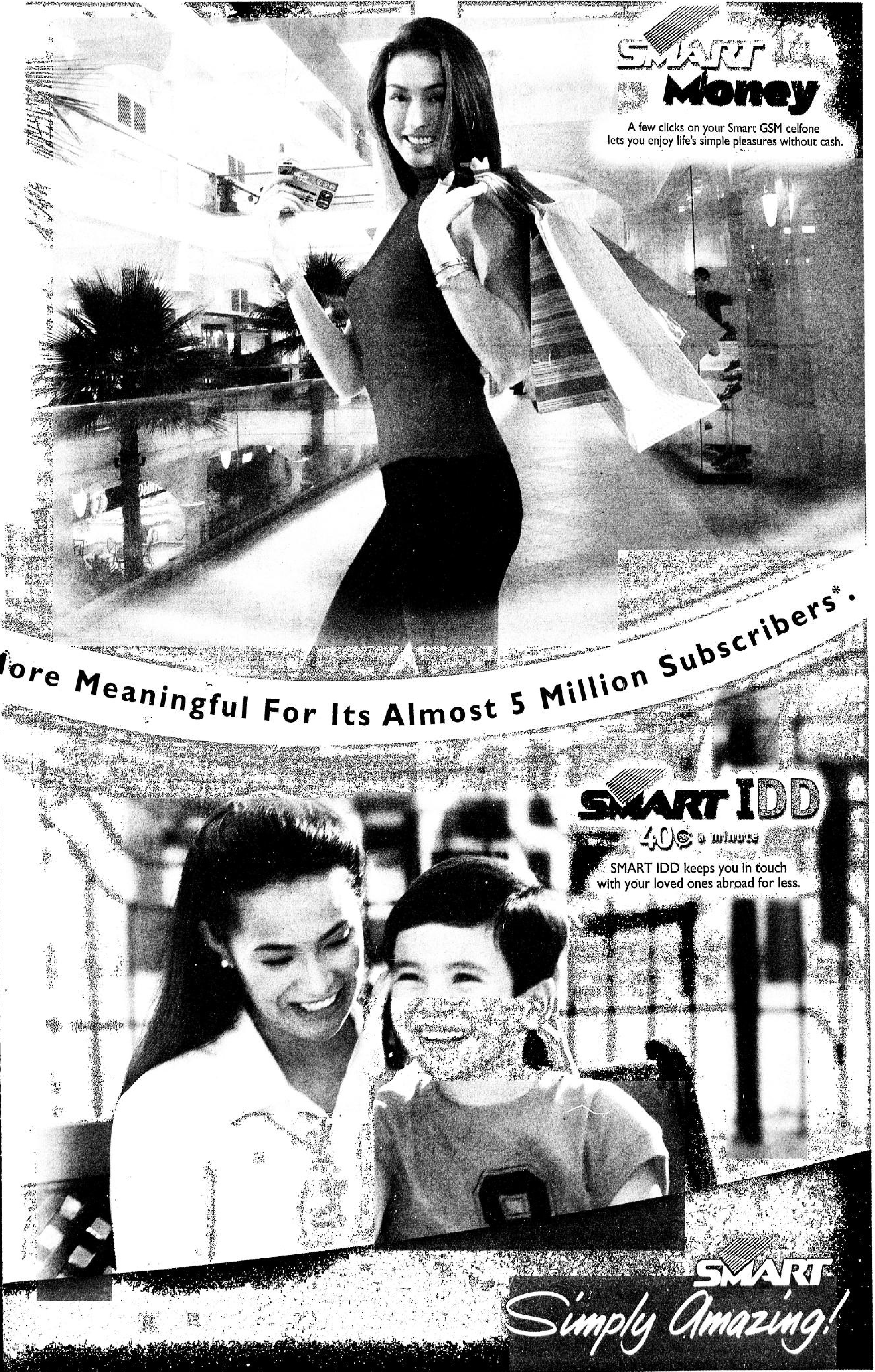

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Nur makes self scarce

COTABATO CITY—The Moro National Liberation Front under Gov. Nur Misuari of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is silent and the former rebel chief has isolated himself from the public.

Mahendra Madjilon, acting spokesperson for Misuari, said recently that the governor has been in Jolo since the Aug. 14 plebiscite but admitted "we do not know what he is thinking or what he is going to do."

But Madjilon later admitted that Misuari has been studying options for the MNLF faction under him now that the plebiscite is over.

"The governor is studying our options and we are behind him," he said.

Madjilon also said Misuari has been meeting with his lieutenants in Jolo but that he is not aware of specific issues being discussed by the group.

The Misuari-led MNLF faction opposed the plebiscite, saying it was a violation of the 1996 Peace Agreement signed by the MNLF and the government.

"We will officially inform the Organization of Islamic Conference of this violation," Misuari then said when informed that the plebiscite was being pushed through.

Misuari even branded the Aug. 14 exercise that expanded the ARMM into five provinces and a city as "a sacrilege to an international agreement."

The conduct of the plebiscite also paved the way for the scheduling of the ARMM gubernatorial elections in November.

When asked whether Misuari would seek reelection, Madjilon said "no because Misuari rejected the plebiscite and its results also."

Only Basilan and Marawi City opted to join the expanded autonomous region, the Commission on Elections said.

Subsequently, the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development, which used to be under Misuari but was turned over to MNLF secretary general and Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema, was deemed abolished, according to Commissioner Rex Borra.

The poll body said the NO to inclusion in ARMM garnered 2,004,519 votes while YES got 539,330 votes.

Misuari was "promoted" by his former subordinates who formed the MNLF Council of 15. He was elevated as MNLF chairman emeritus, an act Misuari rejected. He dismissed his lieutenants that joined the Council of 15.

Misuari had said that Malacañang used the Council of 15 to neutralize him.

Samson Gogo of the ARMM's public information office, said Misuari was not losing hope.

"It's not a hopeless case," Gogo said referring to the internal squabbles and the recent political exercise.

"His door is open and will always be open for his deputies who formed the Council if they decided to return," Gogo said, adding that Saudi Arabia, an influential OIC member still recognizes Misuari and those behind him.

Misuari called members of the Council of 15 "traitors" to their cause.

Sema told a gathering of MNLF supporters in Maguindanao last month that Misuari refused to accept change in the MNLF organization. Sema said the Bangsamoro people want change, development and peace and not dictatorship. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Min-danao Bureau*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Western sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience monsoon rains. The rest of the country will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with rains	HI 28° Lo 24°
Baguio	Cloudy with rains	HI22° Lo 15°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with rains	HI 29° Lo 21°
Laoag	Cloudy with rains	HI 29° Lo 24°
Clark Zone	Cloudy with rains	HI 28° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Cloudy with rains	HI 26° Lo 23°
Legazpi	Cloudy with rains	HI 28° Lo 25°
Calapan	Cloudy with rains	HI 29° Lo 25°
Bacolod	Cloudy with rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with rains	HI 31° Lo 26°
Cebu	Cloudy with rains	HI 30° Lo 26°
Tacloban	Cloudy with rains	HI 30° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with rains	HI 32° Lo 25°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rains	HI 31° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with rains	HI 32° Lo 26°

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2 cell phone firms accused of connivance

BY IRENE R. SINO-CRUZ
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Mayor Tomas Osmeña has accused the Globe Telecom Inc. and the Smart Communications Inc. of conniving with each other when the two telecommunications giants decided to cut the number of free text messages for cell phone users starting September.

"What bothers me is that the competition is talking to each other because by Sept. 1, free text messages will be reduced," said Osmeña in his speech during the inauguration of Smart's second GSM switch in Cebu on Wednesday last week.

"This is an unhappy development because it demonstrates (a) connivance between the two companies. That is not what competition is all about," he added.

If the reduction is implemented, Osmeña warned that the city government will give *kalabasa* awards to the two companies.

'Making money'

"If you invested here, it is not because you love us but because you make money from us," Osmeña told Smart officials and employees led by president Napoleon Nazareno who was here to inaugurate Smart's second Mobile Switch Center at the PLDT Tower along Natalio Bacalso Avenue.

The new switch is part of the major nationwide expansion program that Smart is undertaking for its GSM network.

The mayor's remarks generated uncomfortable laughter among the officials and employees of Smart and its parent company, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Smiles were eventually replaced with looks of dismay.

When Nazareno began his closing remark, he told the crowd: "I have to be brief because we have received so much today."

Feisty

A group of Smart executives from Manila also reacted to Osmeña's critique while on their way to the parking area: "*Isog pala talaga ang* mayor *ninyo dito* (Your mayor here is very feisty)."

Globe and Smart will cut free text messages by 40 percent starting Sept. 1. A P300 prepaid card will carry only 33 free text messages instead of the usual 100.

The Globe executives had declined to comment but they promised to issue a formal statement in a day or two.

Ramon Isberto, Smart public affairs head, on the other hand, refuted Osmeña's allegations.

He said the Globe and the Smart "watch each other's moves," in an effort to explain the almost simultaneous reduction of free text messages.

Isberto maintained that the reduction is the "less painful way" for Smart subscribers.

"Reducing our free text allocation is the less painful way since we do not have to increase our rates," he told reporters.

Probe

A few hours after the inauguration, the Cebu City Council passed a resolution asking the National Telecommunications Commission to reconsider its decision allowing Globe and Smart to cut the free text messages.

"The telecommunications companies concerned have contractual obligations to the subscribing public, which cannot be unilaterally amended," the resolution said.

Councilor Danilo Fernan, who sponsored the resolution, said it was unfair for the NTC to render a decision without consulting the subscribers.

"The general welfare of the city of Cebu warrants immediate and timely public hearings to determine the propriety of the reduction of the allocated free text messages provided by Smart and Globe," he said.

Isberto said Smart has been shouldering the cost of the text messages. When this service was first offered, it was for a fee. The company offered free messages later as a marketing strategy.

Capital

Since the company has to invest in facilities to remain competitive, he said there is a need for funds to finance capital expenditures.

"The best way to look at the reduction of our text allocation is on the effort of Smart to keep up with the technology," he said.

Nazareno said the company invested P15 billion last year for its expansion.

"This is larger than our revenues. This year our target is ₱21 billion for investment," Nazareno added.

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					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
CEBU	5J - 557	Daily	0130	0240	P2,608	P2,049	P1,999
	5J - 559	Daily	0500	0610	P2,608	P2,309	
	5J - 561	Daily	0700	0810			
	5J - 563	Daily	0900	1010			
	5J - 565	Daily	1100	1210			
	5J - 567	Daily	1300	1410			
	5J - 569	Daily	1500	1610			
	5J - 571	Daily	1700	1810			
DAVAO	5J - 961	Daily	0430	0610	P3,307	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 963	Daily	1020	1200			
	5J - 965	Daily	1340	1520			
	5J - 967	Daily	1600	1740			
CAGAYAN de ORO	5J - 381	Daily	0510	0635	P3,295	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 383	Daily	0930	1055			
TACLOBAN	5J - 651	Daily	0610	0720	P2,718	P2,419	P1,999
	5J - 655	Daily	1210	1320			
	5J - 657	M/T/Th/Sat	1400	1510			
ILOILO	5J - 451	Daily	0505	0605	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 455	Daily	0955	1055			
	5J - 457	Daily	1510	1610			
BACOLOD	5J - 473	Mon to Sat	0510	0610	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 475	Daily	1000	1100			
	5J - 477	W/F/Sun	1325	1425			
	5J - 479	Daily	1630	1730			
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 851	Daily	0520	0650	P3,295	P2,639	P2,399
	5J - 561/431*	M/W/Th/Sat	0700	1000			
ROXAS	5J - 373	Daily	0530	0630	P2,279	P1,979	P1,799
DUMAGUETE	5J - 627	Daily	1340	1450	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999
KALIBO	5J - 339	Daily	0900	0950	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: CEBU

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 558	Daily	0400	0510	P2,608	P2,049	P1,999
	5J - 560	Daily	0700	0810	P2,608	P2,309	
	5J - 562	Daily	0900	1010			
	5J - 564	Daily	1100	1210			
	5J - 566	Daily	1300	1410			
	5J - 568	Daily	1500	1610			
	5J - 570	Daily	1700	1810			
	5J - 572	Daily	1900	2010			
DAVAO	5J - 593	Daily	0800	0850	P2,339	P2,039	P1,799
	5J - 597	M/W/F	1420	1510			
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 431	M/W/Th/Sat	0905	1000	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799
ILOILO	5J - 164	Daily	1725	1800	P1,799	P1,599	P1,499
BACOLOD	5J - 126	Mon to Sat	0810	0840	P1,599	P1,399	P1,299

ORIGIN: DAVAO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 962	Daily	0720	0900	P3,307	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 964	Daily	1240	1420			
	5J - 966	Daily	1600	1740			
	5J - 968	Daily	1820	2000			
CEBU	5J - 594	Daily	0930	1020	P2,339	P2,039	P1,799
	5J - 598	M/W/F	1550	1640			
ILOILO	5J - 598/164*	M/W/F	1550	1800	P3,295	P2,839	P2,549
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 393	T/F/Sun	0910	1010	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: CAGAYAN DE ORO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 382	Daily	0715	0840	P3,295	P2,919	P2,399
	5J - 384	Daily	1135	1300			

ORIGIN: TACLOBAN

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 652	Daily	0800	0910	P2,718	P2,419	P1,999
	5J - 656	Daily	1400	1510			
	5J - 658	M/T/Th/Sat	1550	1700			

ORIGIN: ILOILO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 456	Daily	1135	1235	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 458	Daily	1650	1750			
	5J - 462	Daily	1900	2000			
CEBU	5J - 161	Daily	0645	0720	P1,799	P1,599	P1,499
DAVAO	5J - 161/593*	Daily	0645	0850	P3,295	P2,839	P2,549

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: BACOLOD

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 474	Mon to Sat	0930	1030	P2,498	P2,199	P1,949
	5J - 476	Daily	1150	1250			
	5J - 478	W/F/Sun	1515	1615			
	5J - 480	Daily	1820	1920			
CEBU	5J - 125	Mon to Sat	0700	0730	P1,599	P1,399	P1,299

ORIGIN: ZAMBOANGA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 852	Daily	1050	1220	P3,295	P2,639	P2,399
	5J - 432/562*	M/W/Th/Sat	0730	1010			
CEBU	5J - 432	M/W/Th/Sat	0730	0825	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799
DAVAO	5J - 394	T/FSun	0730	0830	P2,388	P2,089	P1,799

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: ROXAS

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 374	Daily	0710	0810	P2,279	P1,979	P1,799

ORIGIN: DUMAGUETE

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 628	Daily	1530	1640	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

ORIGIN: KALIBO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES		
					NORMAL	VALUE	2-DAY ADVANCE PURCHASE
MANILA	5J - 340	Daily	1030	1120	P2,608	P2,309	P1,999

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Flash flood destroys ₱100M in farm crops

COTABATO CITY—The flash flood that claimed the lives of at least seven people in Maguindanao also destroyed more than P100 million worth of agricultural crops.

Salik Panalunsong, Maguindanao provincial agriculture officer, said the flood destroyed P104,329,910 worth of ready-to-harvest and mature crops.

He said the weeklong flood inundated 11,668 hectares of farmland in 18 towns damaging 17,575 metric tons of various crops, mostly rice and corn.

The hardest hit towns were Mamasapano and Shariff Aguak, which suffered more than P8 million and P13 million in damages, respectively.

The calamity, considered to be the worst since the 1995 Lake Maughan tragedy in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, that flooded Maguindanao, also made the future bleak for 9,241 farmers and displaced about 10,000 others. Eleven others are still missing since Aug. 12.

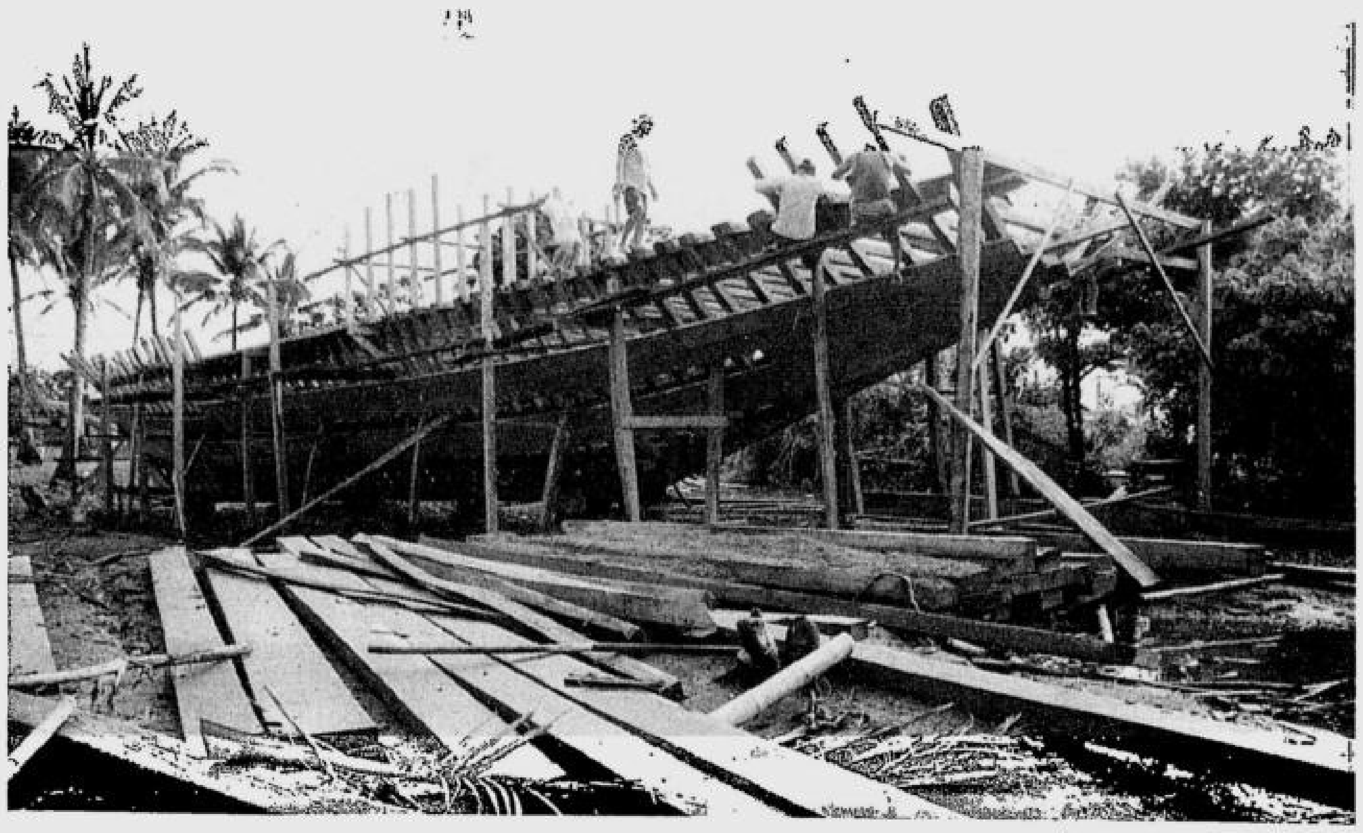
"These crops are mostly due for harvest while some were already in their vegetative and maturing stages," Panalunsong said.

The other flooded towns were Ampatuan, Barira, Buldon, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Datu Paglas, Kabuntalan, Pagalungan, Pagagawan, Parang, Sultan Kudarat, SK Pendatun, Sultan sa Barongis, South Upi, Talayan and Talitay.

Maguindanao has not fully recovered from the damages brought about by recent clashes between the military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front at the time of the flooding.Floods also wrought heavy damage to property and infrastructure in other areas of the country.

In Central and Northern Luzon, the floods brought landslides and misery to the lives of commuters and farmers.

In the Visayas, dozens of people were reported missing or drowned as a result of heavy rains, floodings and landslides. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



BOAT YARD AUDIE DE LA CRUZ

The country's economic planners need not look far for industries that deserve to be left alone to thrive, if the government couldn't support them. One of these is the boat-building business in Palanan, Isabela that churns out fishing boats like this one taking shape in the town's Barangay Culasi.

Not knowing all normal for DND chief, says Orly

CEBU CITY—Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes has found an ally in his predecessor.

Former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado supported Reyes' explanation during the Senate's Question Hour on the military intelligence service's investigation of Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Mercado told the Cebu City-based radio station dyLA that Reyes was correct when he said that the job of a defense secretary is to set policy direction.

Even in the United States, he added, the defense secretary does not interfere in the day-to-day operations of the military.

But, he added, the defense secretary should be given the final report of every operation conducted by agencies and personnel under his office.

"The defense secretary is like a political link between the President and the military," said Mercado, who served as defense secretary during the Estrada administration.

Mercado briefly held the same position when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took over the presidency on Jan. 20. He resigned on Jan. 25 in protest over the appointment of retired Gen. Lisandro Abadida as national security adviser.

Mercado said Reyes could be telling the truth when he told the senators that he was not aware of the P3 million fund released by Malacañang to finance the intelligence-gathering mission to the United States against Lacson.

The mission conducted by a joint-military team was to gather information on Lacson's alleged bank accounts abroad.

Mercado said there are operational details wherein the President directly hands out an order to a subordinate, as commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces.

In such cases, he added, Reyes would not be aware of these directives because these did not pass through him.

Mercado also pointed out that Reyes, as defense secretary, has other responsibilities aside from handling the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

He said Reyes also has his hands full in handling the National Disaster Coordinating Council, the causes of war veterans and the Defense College of the Philippines, among others.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Collect more taxes, Negros gov't told

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Department of Interior and Local Government has urgedthe provincial government of Negros Oriental to improve its tax collection efficiency and to refrain from filling up existing vacant positions except in the health sector.

A year-long study conducted by the agency from 1999 to 2000 also recommended the creation of an Information Technology unit by abolishing two or more positions.

Negros Oriental's overall performance rating in the study was 73.24 percent, which also meant "very satisfactory."

The province obtained near-outstanding ratings in the field of local special bodies/councils organizations, development planning, fiscal administration, economic services and environmental protection services.

But the DILG study also noted "vital deficiencies" which it said should be given priority attention and concern.

The province, it noted, exceeded the budgetary allocation of its personal services by 58.16 percent. The Local Government Code sets at 45 percent the budget allocation for personnel services.

The province has also failed to formulate a human resource development plan, capability-building or training plan and that only 76 percent of its heavy equipment were working.

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Curfew violators abused in detention

DAVAO CITY—A non-government organization has urged the government to look into the alleged physical and sexual abuse of children rounded up for violation of curfew hours.

Pilgrim Guasa, executive director of the Tambayan Youth Center, said there have been instances when children rounded up for violation of curfew were sexually abused or raped while in the custody of police.

Guasa said some of the girls were allegedly asked for sexual favors.

She said her allegations could be substantiated by documents gathered by Mae Templa of Gabriela.

Guasa raised the issue during a committee hearing conducted by Councilor Angela Librado on her proposed resolution "to humanize the treatment of violators of the curfew hour for minors."

Senior Supt. Wilfredo Garci, city police chief, said the allegations were serious, but added the abuses did not happen during his time.

Garcia urged Guasa to submit records of evidence to substantiate her statement so that charges can be filed in court.

Garcia told Guasa that she could be a principal witness in the prosecution of the police officers who allegedly abused children in police custody.

But Guasa said in the protection of children, the government should go back to basics and find out why the children are out in the streets in the first place. *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

EXPRESSWAY WOES

Traffic snarls for 9 hours

CALAMBA CITY—A vehicular accident, apparently caused by continuous rains, jammed traffic along the South Luzon Expressway for 20 kilometers for nine hours Friday.

The accident involved a southbound six-wheel refrigerated closed van with Plate No. TGH 363 that turned on its left side down along Susana Heights at the Muntinlupa City portion of the South Luzon Expressway about 3 p.m. Friday.

The 20-kilometer traffic buildup affected the highway's stretch from Cabuyao to Muntinlupa City and ran until midnight.

"It was a self-accident," Fred Villar, Philippine National Construction Corp. radio operator told the INQUIRER.

"The (unidentified) driver was apparently negotiating the slippery portion of the Slex due to the continuous downpour but was unable to control his van, causing it to swerve and turn upside down," said Villar in Filipino.

There was no report of injury on the occupants of the truck.

Villar said efforts of PNCC wreckers to remove the truck were fruitless. The vehicle remained lying on its side at the center of the expressway for several hours since 3 p.m., aggravating the traffic situation until midnight.

PNCC authorities were finally able to solicit the assistance of the Manila Electric Co. which readily provided a heavy-duty crane to pull out the troubled truck from the road.

Commuters Florencio Cañon and Ogie Carrillo told the INQUIRER that it took them five hours to negotiate the highway from Cabuyao town to Ayala, Alabang, to visit a religious sisters' convent there.

They reached home in Victoria, Laguna, about 11 p.m.

Meanwhile, two separate vehicular accidents occurred on Saturday morning one hour after another along the southbound portion of Southville in Carmona, Cavite and the Calabuso, Biñan portion of the expressway, respectively.

Initial reports submitted to the PNCC, according to Villar, said that the first smashup, which happened at 8:25 a.m. along Southville, Carmona, involved a southbound private jeep and an unidentified vehicle.

The second accident occurred at 9:20 a.m. along Barangay Calabuso, Biñan, involving four southbound vehicles. Some of the passengers of the vehicles, who were unidentified, were reported injured during the two accidents, Villar said.

The injured passengers were brought to nearby hospitals for medical attention, he said.

Although traffic is not extraordinary along the Slex, Friday's ordeal for many commuters was one of the worst.

Clogged drains, potholes in the middle of the highway and poor traffic management contribute to the ritual of traffic jams on the expressway. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Gov't offices in Iloilo top fire hazards

BY NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Government offices here are prone to violate fire safety standards more than private establishments, results of annual inspections of the city fire marshal showed.

Fire inspectors found violations of fire safety standards in 10 of 12 government offices inspected in May this year.

In separate inspections conducted last year, fire inspectors also found violations in 19 of 28 or 68 percent of private establishments inspected.

Iloilo City fire marshal Roel Jeremy Diaz said most violations were categorized as "low hazards" like defective fire alarm systems, fire extinguishers that are not working and lack of emergency exits.

While these are not the primary sources or causes of fire, Diaz said the violations could cause injuries and even deaths in case of fire.

'High hazard'

Several government offices have violations that were considered in the "high hazard" level like tampered fuses, which could cause short circuits and start fires.

Among the government offices inspected, the regional office of the Government Service Insurance System has the most violations with nine.

Also found with violations were the regional offices of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports; Department of Public Works and Highways; the old Iloilo City Hall; Hall of Justice; Western Visayas College of Science and Technology; National Police Commission; National Economic Development Authority; and National Food Authority.

The regional office of the Bureau of Treasury and the Department of Labor and Employment were the only ones without violations.

Notices

Diaz said the city fire marshal office had sent notices to the heads of the offices informing them of the violations.

Under the Fire Code of the Philippines, violators have 90 days to correct the deficiencies or pay a fine of up to P3,000. The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) can also recommend the closure of the office or establishment that continues to commit the violations.

But in the case of government offices, the BFP usually calls the attention of the heads of the agencies. "It would be impractical to recommend closure because many of these offices render vital services," Diaz said.

Many of these violations remain unchecked, however, because the government offices lack funds to correct the violations.

"They usually have to make do with substandard electric materials or just repair those with defects instead of replacing them," Diaz said.

He said many more offices could have violated fire safety standards especially those that could not be inspected by the 18 fire safety inspectors in the city.

As of June this year fire incidents have damaged property worth about P14.7 million.

Last year, the BFP recorded 115 fire incidents that resulted in a death, five injuries and damage to property estimated to cost P25.3 million. Fifty-three of these fires were caused by faulty electrical systems.

Mayors divided over PNP control

DIGOS CITY—Mayor Arsenio Latasa said the bill granting local executives control and supervision of the police could create monsters, instead of addressing the peace and order problem. "Local control might only put police operations in jeopardy as some executives are not really serious in the drive against lawlessness," Latasa, former president of the League of the Municipalities of Davao del Sur, said.

He said instead of addressing criminality, some mayors might resort converting their entire local police force into a private army.

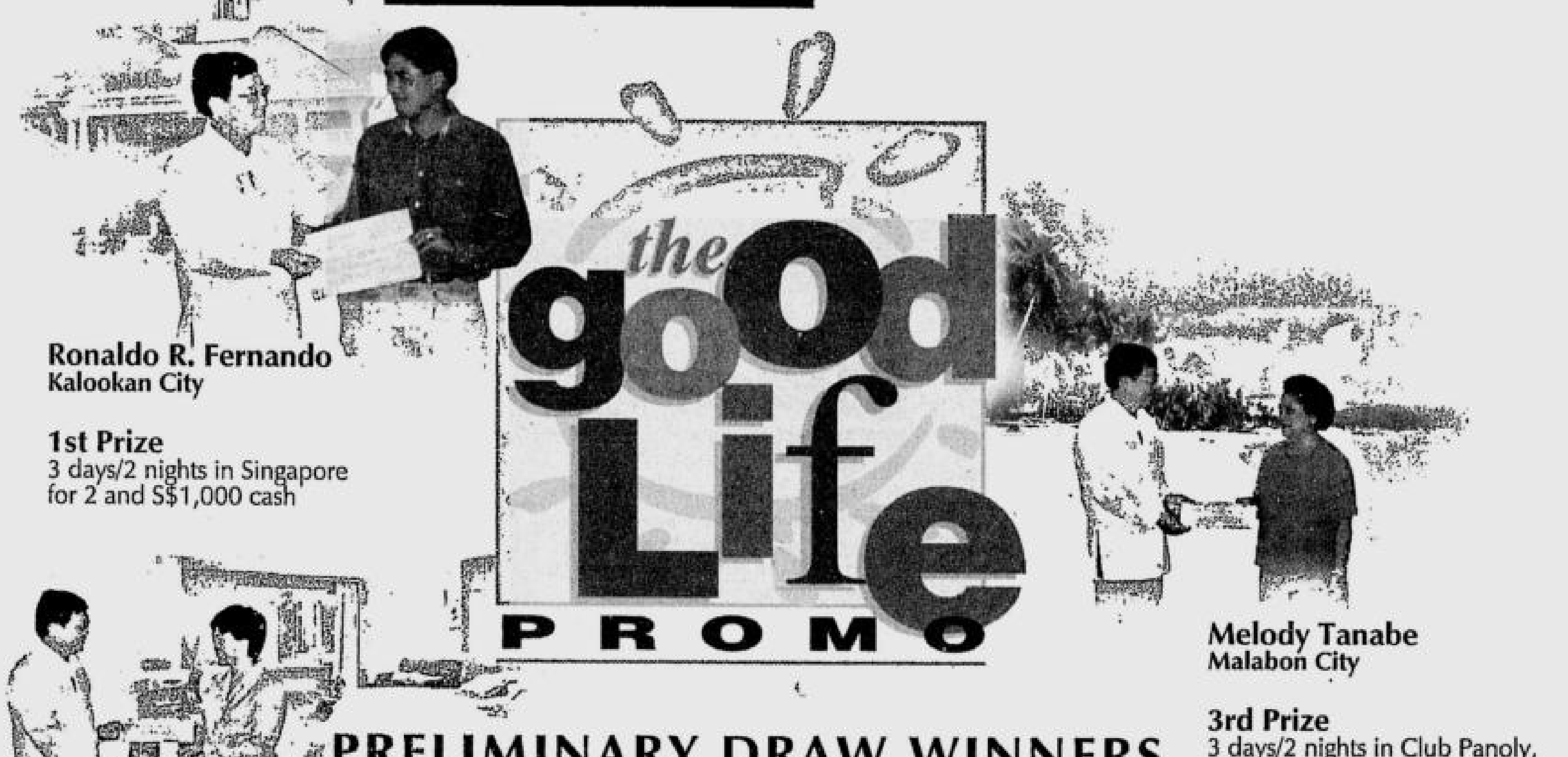
"I am not saying that some local executives are the criminals themselves, but what if they were?" Latasa said.

He said the current setup is working just fine.

Local executives are given a hand in peace and order matters, but they do not directly control or supervise the police force.

But former Davao del Sur Gov. Rogelio Llanos said it would be better if mayors and governors were given direct control and supervision of the police.

He said this would greatly boost efforts against criminality. Llanos said maintaining the current setup does not guarantee that the police are free from abuse by local executives. *Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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1 For every P20,000 ADB in Keppel Bank's ATM Savings, Ordinary Savings and Checking, Pro-Client Checking or Pro Client Plus during the promo period, an account automatically earns a point for the raffle draw.
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4 Winners will be determined through a computerized draw. The computer shall generate the account number to be included in the raffle based on the points earned.
5 The account number will serve as the raffle number. The number of points earned from each account will be equivalent to the number of times the account number will be generated for the raffle.
6 An account can only win once on the same raffle date. In case an account is drawn more than once, the account holder is entitled to claim the prize of higher value.
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13 All raffle prizes are tax-free.
14 Raffle-draw dates will be on August 6, 2001, and November 5, 2001, 10:00 a.m. at the Keppel Bank Head Office, E. Rodriguez, Sr. Avenue Corner Monte De Piedad St., Cubao, Q. C.

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Solons summon 2 ex-Abu hostages

(From page A1)

member MILF that was coddling the Abu Sayyaf, giving them sanctuary when attacked by the military in Basilan.

Mad bishops

Nacorda has also testified that the kidnappers use guns marked with a military insignia.

The officers denied the allegations and in turn suggested that Nacorda was in league with the gunmen, sparking outrage among bishops.

"Do not divert the issue. What they should do is investigate those accused by Father Nacorda," said Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, spokesperson for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

He said the bishops had carried out their own investigation of Nacorda, 44, who was held for several months by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan in 1994.

"In the end, we concluded that he was very sincere in his statements and allegations."

Invitation

In its second public hearing at the Basilan State College here on Saturday, the House national defense committee resolved to invite Romero to the third hearing, which will be held in Manila on Wednesday.

A press release from Pichay's office said Reghis' "companion" would also be asked to testify.

Romero and Rodriguez, who were recovered with fellow hostage, 9-year-old RJ Recio, before the kidnappers slipped through a military cordon on June 2, may provide the key to the truth in the controversy, according to Pichay.

The 17 congressmen reached the decision after making public some of the claims of 20 witnesses who executed affidavits supporting Nacorda's allegations in a closed-door executive session in Lamitan on Aug. 24.

"I have noted here that there is an allegation that there was ransom money paid, and that after the ransom money was paid, Reghis Romero was seen walking free, so perhaps we should also summon Reghis Romero," Pichay proposed in the hearing. Other committee members agreed that Romero could shed light on whether ransom was actually paid.

In an interview, Pichay expressed optimism that Romero will attend the third hearing.

"We will ask him if *pinatakas ba siya o nakatakas siya mula sa loob ng* (he was allowed to escape or if he escaped on his own from the) hospital," Pichay told the INQUIRER, referring to the Don Jose Maria Torres Memorial Hospital.

"Definitely, he will come, he is willing to help," he said.

AFP: Good idea

The five accused military officers—Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, Col. Jovenal Narcise, Maj. Eliseo Campued, Capt. Hubert Acierto and Capt. Nicolas Quemado—welcomed the idea of Romero testifying.

"That's good," Dominguez said. "Hopefully, anybody who can tell the truth should be invited, even those other freed hostages."

Narcise echoed his sentiments. "In my opinion, (Romero) should attend the next hearing so we can find out if ransom money was paid. Of course he should tell the truth," he told the INQUIRER.

The two ground junior officers, Campued and Acierto, who were part of the operation in June, expressed the hope that Romero's appearance would put an end to the controversy.

"He is the key to this problem, to this controversy. We want to end this controversy once and for all, because I firmly believe that there was no collusion whatsoever from our level up," Campued said.

Acierto challenged Nacorda's witnesses to produce evidence of military-Abu Sayyaf connivance.

Quemado said the damage to their careers and reputations had been done, and stressed that "that priest and his witnesses should prove first my presence last June 2 either in Lamitan or in Basilan."

Based on 103rd Army Brigade records, Quemado took a 14-day sick leave starting May 23, to seek treatment for sore eyes. The leave was approved by then acting brigade commander Narcise.

Quemado said he cut short his leave, departing from Koronadal City, South Cotabato, on June 2 and arriving in Isabela the next day. From 103rd Brigade headquarters, he proceeded to Lamitan on same day, June 3, he said. ***With a report from AFP***

Zubiri clarifies report

IN A LETTER to the INQUIRER, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri reacted to a front-page report yesterday headlined "Military could have delivered ransom, says solon."

Zubiri, one of 17 congressmen conducting a fact-finding inquiry in Basilan, said the report "may have given your readers the misimpression that I was accusing our Armed Forces of ransoming Reghis Romero from the Abu Sayyaf."

He said: "Nowhere did I mention in my interpellation of the military officers . . . that AFP elements officially acted as couriers of the ransom money or created smokescreens to conceal the delivery."

According to Zubiri, he had spoken in an interview about "the insistence of many Basileños that rogues within the AFP, operating outside the chain of command, may have been contracted for a fee to deliver the ransom."

But, he added, "I repeatedly stressed to him that if some soldiers indeed served as brokers, they were not sanctioned by Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez."

He also clarified that when he said the military "could have created a chaotic situation" during the Lamitan siege to allow Romero to escape, "I did not mean to imply that a *moro-moro* was staged, at a cost to several lives, just to camouflage a ransom delivery."

Gloria . . .

(From page A1)

her honor at the Singapore Botanic Garden.

Named *Aranthera Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo*, the orchid bore vibrant red flowers and towered over three others from which the President chose.

"It was a good pick. It honored us very much," Tan Wee Kiat, chief executive officer of Singapore's National Parks Board, said in an interview after the ceremonies.

The event was held as Ms Macapagal's three-day state visit winded up yesterday. She was scheduled to arrive in Manila last night.

Naming an orchid after very important guests and their partners is a practice and courtesy extended by the 142-year-old, 52-hectare park.

Among those with orchids named after them are Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darrusalam, South African leader Nelson Mandela, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and tormer Philippine first lady Amelita Ramos.

Garbed in a light blue dress, Ms Macapagal arrived at the park around 9:15 a.m., accompanied by her daughter Luli, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and some members of her Cabinet. They were given a 15-minute tour by Tan.

Ms Macapagal went straight to the gardens after an early morning Mass at the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd.

After the tour, Ms Macapagal was escorted to the veranda of the colonial-style house where the four orchids had been placed. After choosing one that will be named after her, she was asked to name the others.

She decided to name a yellow orchid after her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, and a lilac-colored one after her mother Evangelina Macaraeg.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo admires the orchid named in her honor in Singapore. REUTERS

Aranthera Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was bred from two orchids, *Arachnis Ishbel* and *Renanthera Rattanakosin*, according to Tan.

"Behind that breeding is *Arachnis Philippinensis*, which is one of the native (flowers) from the Philippines which gives it a strong vibrant red (color)," he said.

"She liked it because the sway is so strong and it is a very powerful orchid. What pleased us also is that she granted our request to have two other orchids named," he added.

The other events in the President's schedule yesterday were an interview with Singapore-based Filipina reporter Jenny Alejandro, lunch with Filipino information technology professionals, and the inauguration of the Bayanihan Center.

GMA back . . .

(From page A1)

join the staff of the new training center.

The professionals will volunteer their time to teach computer proficiency, cosmetology and other skills to maids and other low-skilled Filipinos working in the wealthy city-state.

Sto. Tomas said upgrading the skills of OFWs would allow them to take higher job positions upon their return to the Philippines.

More than 120,000 Filipinos, about 80,000 of them maids, work in Singapore.

"Some of them earn more than I do," Sto. Tomas said of the maids who earn an average of $250 a month—more than double the average starting salary for a professional in Manila.

More than 7 million Filipinos, many driven by poverty and lack of jobs at home, work as professionals, seafarers, nurses, entertainers and maids abroad.

They send home an average $8 billion a year. Their remittances have helped prop up the Philippine economy in times of crises, the most recent of which was the Asian financial meltdown in 1997 and 1998.

New investors

The money "invigorates the economy . . . so you are a new breed of economic investors," she told another group of Filipino workers at the Mandarin Hotel ballroom.

"Thousands of homes are being built" in the Philippines with overseas workers' money, Ms Macapagal said, adding that the funds also finance education, new business start-ups and other kinds of economic development.

"We will strengthen bilateral relations with countries hosting large numbers of Filipinos," she added.

On another front, she promised to campaign for the ratification of the 1999 UN Convention on the Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers and their families and the adoption of a UN resolution for the protection of female migrant workers.

The President said she would work for the passage of a bill allowing overseas Filipinos to be able to vote.

In her speech, however, Ms Macapagal said about 4 million Filipinos were now out of jobs, compared with only 2.5 million four years ago.

According to her, 40 percent of the population is now mired in poverty compared with only about 30 percent four years ago.

"Now is the time to prove our mettle as a nation and as a people and we can start our economic rebirth wherever we are by thinking Filipino, buying Filipino and investing Filipino," Ms Macapagal said to a resounding applause.

After her speech, thousands of her fans lined up the street outside the hotel to cheer her convoy on the way to the airport.

Ms Macapagal started off Sunday by attending an early Mass at a Singapore church. She and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo also strolled through Singapore's botanical gardens.

Ms Macapagal arrived here Friday on the second leg of a Southeast Asian swing that also took her to Brunei, where she held talks with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

She held meetings with Singapore President S.R. Nathan, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and influential Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

She witnessed the signing of 20 agreements, covering tourism, information and communications, air traffic and labor.

During her trip, Ms Macapagal, her economic team and a 50-member business delegation appealed for Singapore investments to help lift the economy.

She also sought to dispel the Philippines' image as unsafe for tourists and businessmen because of the spate of kidnappings for ransom.

"Our biggest prospect is Brunei's willingness to participate in a $500-million petrochemical consortium project, that the Department of Energy is organizing in Bataan," Ms Macapagal said upon her arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"The tide of opportunity is flowing in our direction. Let us seize the day with hard work, diligence and integrity," she said. ***With reports from TJ Burgonio, AP, and AFP***

Ex-Namfrel 'Marine' no stranger to safe houses

(From page A1)

Free Elections assigned to various election hot spots—Caluag hid the computer experts, along with several others, somewhere in Quezon City until the triumph of People Power at Edsa in February 1986.

Men for others

"In Ateneo, we're teaching our students the value of service, of being men and women for others. It would be hypocrisy on our part if we won't do it ourselves when the time comes," he says, recalling his years first as a teacher at the Ateneo de Manila high school before he entered the seminary and later as director of basic education for the university.

His family shaped his outlook decisively. Born to Rodolfo Caluag and Josefa Anzures on Nov. 4, 1958, the young Caluag grew up with his grandparents in Quezon City. He was particularly influenced by his grandfather, a former judge.

He remembers his grandfather telling him how to treat house help: "If our food is not the same as that of the servants anymore, it's either we couldn't afford what we're eating or we have become selfish."

At parties, his grandfather often went to the host first to ask for food for his driver, he recalls.

Caluag studied at the Ateneo de Manila from the grades all the way up to college, where he graduated with a degree in interdisciplinary studies.

He was in his third year in college when the late activist Lean Alejandro of the University of the Philippines invited him to be one of the founding members of the League of Filipino Students in the 1970s. He cordially declined the invitation but remained an activist at heart.

When Caluag started teaching, his sense of purpose became much clearer—he wanted to become a Jesuit.

"God wants me to offer my life and services to the formation of the youth. That's the bottom line of my involvement."

Three years later, he joined the Society of Jesus. As a Jesuit, he got more involved in social issues. "My involvement in sociopolitical issues comes from a very pastoral perspective . . . (These issues) are still the concern of the Church, provided that we don't become partisan."

In 1993, Caluag was ordained priest. In 2000, as a member of the Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino II, he was among the loud voices demanding the ouster of Joseph Estrada.

Marked man

The general public began to take special notice of him starting June 26, after Mawanay and his family, accompanied by TV anchor Arnold Clavio, walked into his life.

A marked man, Mawanay badly needed help. Surprised, Caluag remembers asking himself: "Why of all priests would he come to me?"

But the 42-year-old Jesuit believes it was part of God's plan. He decided to help Mawanay primarily because of the man's family and his willingness "to correct the wrongs he has done in the past."

During his four-day stay at the safe house Caluag provided, Mawanay showed no signs of the swindler that Sen. Panfilo Lacson had made him out to be, Caluag says.

Mawanay never asked for special treatment, except for a TV set for his two kids and a prepaid card for his important phone calls, the Jesuit recalls.

"He was not demanding. He just kept quiet and accepted what we offered him."

Today, Caluag is nothing more than Mawanay's spiritual adviser. When the man appears weak and dejected, he tells him: "If you're telling the truth, be brave. The difficulties are part of your quest to unravel the truth. Stay strong and produce evidence, evidence, evidence."

Aborted confession

One time, Caluag thought of administering Mawanay the sacrament of penance, if only to absolve the man of his sins before making his revelations. But Caluag immediately aborted the idea.

There was the risk of breaking the seal of confession, and Canon law for that matter, should he be ordered to testify and reveal what Mawanay had told him during confession.

"My support for him is more on the moral and the spiritual. It's not for me to judge if he's telling the truth."

Mawanay's revelations have spurred Caluag to commit to a new mission: to battle drug trafficking and organized crime to protect the future of the youth.

"I am not against the public officials allegedly involved. I'm against narco-politics," he clarifies.

On Aug. 15, Caluag joined other members of civil society in organizing Katotohanan, an alliance of concerned organizations bound to help rid the country of narco-politics.

A very busy man, Caluag has a formula for coping with stress.

"When things get complicated, I go back to the basic principles and values that I have lived and am willing to die for. Then everything becomes fine."

Ador . . .

(From page A1)

He first fancied becoming a pilot and, along with friends, visited an air base in Batangas. He later aspired to take up medicine when his mother began to fall ill in the early 1980s.

The youngest of a brood of four, Mawanay became neither a pilot nor a doctor. He ended up a first-year dropout from San Sebastian College where he had taken up a computer course "because that's what I (could) afford as a working student."

His two brothers and only sister became engineers.

"I wish my eldest son becomes a pilot and the younger one, a doctor—for them to be what I was not," he says.

Mawanay, who will turn 29 next month, was born and raised in a building in Divisoria, Manila, of which his father was the caretaker and where his mother sold boiled eggs, mangoes and rolled sweet rice.

"My parents' business grew through the years and we were then selling ready-to-wear clothes, belts, rice and others. I was still young when I started my own business selling comics and plastic bags," Mawanay recounts.

"My mother started to get sick in 1983 and the family business started to go down because my father had to attend to her. She spent two years in the hospital."

Tough world

It was the hustling and bustling warrens of Divisoria that gave Mawanay the street smarts to survive the tough world he was to immerse himself in.

"If you're not alert, the pickpocket will rob you. If a policeman on the street curses you for some little infraction and you clam up, he's going to 'eat' you. But if you curse him back, he'll leave you alone."

"Peddling smuggled goods is a normal thing in Divisoria. You'd see goods stacked high in pedicabs being delivered and paid for openly. Of course, there (were) cops collecting grease money. That's why even then I looked down on cops."

"Life is hard in Divisoria and elsewhere. You have to know how to hustle. Even if the profit is small, just keep at it because it will grow in time."

Mawanay admits he is not the type who shied away from a fast buck. In 1989, he opened a shop in Divisoria, renting both original and pirated video tapes, the latter coming from stores in Greenhills, San Juan, that specialize in counterfeits.

"Later, I was the one already supplying pirated video tapes in Manila, Quezon City, and as far as Baguio," he says.

Smuggled goods

Mawanay said it didn't take much for him to accept an offer in 1997 from a Manila policeman whom he named only as Toyo to sell smuggled goods.

"I started with 100 boxes of Maling luncheon meat. They give it to me at P15 per can and I sell it at P27. You wouldn't believe this but I have probably sold a total of 2,000 boxes with 48 cans per box. There were Coke-in-cans and Pringles potato chips," he says.

With Toyo giving him protection, he was not caught even once. Mawanay said he finally got to meet the alleged supplier, Lacson, then a police general, in early 1998, and "I graduated to JVC appliances and then Compaq computer laptops."

"By July 1998, I was already trading cell phones. Because the money was bigger, I was already personally delivering checks to Sir Ping," Mawanay says.

He claims that it was his "unpaid commissions" that drew him deeper into the web of the alleged criminal activities of Lacson and his trusted men. "I was in deep. I thought I was going to be paid if I followed orders," he said.

His street-honed instincts bugging him, Mawanay and his family started moving from one place to another by April this year, often staying in lodging houses and motels.

Of the group of 11 policemen and agents he was a part of, he says eight have been summarily executed, including a certain Mang Ben, 60-65 years old. He says he personally saw the bodies of Ben, his wife, and their son.

It was from a motel in Caloocan City that Mawanay and his wife were able to reach broadcaster Arnold Clavio of GMA-7 on June 26.

"I'm his handler," his wife volunteers in jest.

Turning serious, Mawanay's wife says life has become harder since they've been on the run. "But you see, adjusting is a petty matter now. We're trying to set things right," Mrs. Mawanay says.

Looking around the confined quarters where they have been staying since June 30, Mawanay says: "We're living by the day. We don't see the future clearly. Will we still be safe when this is all over?"

Senate probers flirting with 'coup' syndrome

(From page A1)

In parliamentary systems, Question Time provides the political opposition an opportunity to take to task a sitting government's policies and decisions, giving substance to the concept of public accountability of an elected government.

The Philippine Senate, whose traditions come from those of the Westminster system, curiously applied this practice in a different setting.

The senators were not satisfied that three Senate committees were already inquiring into Corpus' allegations against Lacson.

They did not question the government ministers seated across the parliamentary divide. They put the heat on just the defense secretary even though he is not even the head of government.

Show of force

The Question Hour was a show of force, sending the message that the senators were not only closing ranks behind their beleaguered colleague, Lacson, but were also expressing concern for the wrong reasons over the survival of the Senate as one of the strongest pillars of republican democracy.

During the Question Hour, the senators demonstrated their far-ranging powers, including that of slashing the military budget after showing earlier, beyond reasonable doubt, their capacity to abuse their punitive powers on witnesses summoned by their committees.

In that Question Hour, Reyes closed ranks with Corpus. He did not condemn the military investigation of the stream of sensitive information flowing to the intelligence service even months before the May elections.

But Reyes did recognize that the information flow concerned matters that had dangerous implications for the security of the state, and, therefore, were matters that require serious investigation.

The thrust of the questions of some senators was, however, directed at 2004—about rumors of Reyes' presidential ambitions, and even about alleged efforts to undermine the Senate as a step to a military seizure of power.

The Philippines is in a state of turmoil since January when then President Joseph Estrada was ousted until the flurry of investigations in both houses of Congress.

The economy is doing badly, although there are signs it is holding despite the turmoil.

Because of its mania for investigations, Congress is not doing its main job—that of making laws for the nation.

There is a breakdown of law enforcement, and civil society is always up in arms, bringing people to the streets to correct grievances, small or big.

Breakdown

A breakdown of a government's capacity to govern is a function of many things. One of these is breakdown of republican institutions like the Senate—an institution that was compromised by the subordination of its members to Estrada and by its partisan vote in the impeachment trial on the disclosure of the second envelope.

The diversion during the Question Hour of the Senate's focus away from Lacson and toward the operational aspects of military intelligence was a signal that the senators were closing ranks to shield their kind.

When Reyes defended internal military priorities as part of his duty as guardian of national security, it was a signal that the military was also closing ranks in a show of strength.

The question of Corpus' record of involvement in the New People's Army is irrelevant. The military has come to terms with this issue by reintegrating him into the Armed Forces, as it has come to terms with the military rebels who have been reintegrated after their involvement in the coup attempts of 1980s.

Conspiracies

The military intelligence operations following the information on Lacson's activities are hardly an evidence of coup conspiracies.

The Senate does not need Corpus, Reyes or conspiracies to undermine an already badly compromised republican institution. It was a compromise inflicted by the senators themselves on their institution, from the time of Estrada up until today in their attempt to deflect the inquiry away from Lacson, and in their arrogant exercise of power.

After the 1986 People Power Revolution, it took a long time for soldiers to return to the barracks and accept the supremacy of civilian institutions. They rocked the Aquino administration for most of its term with seven coup attempts.

After the Jan. 19, 2001 withdrawal of support for the Estrada administration by the military chain of command, causing it to collapse, the soldiers went back to the barracks right away, leaving the civil authorities and institutions to govern—or make a mess of the nation.

Continuing political turbulence sets the environment for military takeovers when civil institutions are incapable of doing their job.

There's no need for invisible "sinister" forces to instigate plots.

Continuing turbulence in a nation unable to refocus its priorities on the main problem, the economy, leads to a clamor for a man on horse back to restore some semblance of organization, order, discipline and purpose in a chaotic society.

By focusing on the wrong issues and raising the menace of coup conspiracies, the Senate is unwittingly making a fresh coup attempt a self-fulfilling scenario.

Laguna de Bay joins Living Lakes

(From page A1)

an agency attached to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Borja called Laguna de Bay's admission to the network a "very significant and challenging statement."

Say where?

The final leg of the conservationist network's sixth forum was held at Enkhaluk, campsite of the Buryat Oil Co. on the southeastern coast of Baikal, the world's deepest lake, the southeastern portion of which is believed to be Genghis Khan's homeland.

Enkhaluk is in the Buryatia Republic, one of the 21 semi-autonomous republics forming what is now the Russian Federation.

The conference earlier opened in Ulan Ude, capital of Buryatia and a three-hour bus ride from Lake Baikal, known here as the "Pearl of Siberia."

Travel time from Manila to Baikal is more than 58 backbreaking hours, including a five-hour trip from Moscow to the Siberian city of Irkutsk, aboard one of the aging and fly-infested Aeroflot TU-154 jets.

It also includes a leg of one of the most famous, romantic and enjoyable of the world's great train journeys: an eight-hour ride through the eastern Siberian steppes and taigas on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Lake Baikal, near the Mongolian border, is home to the nerpa, the world's only freshwater seal. It forms an immense sickle-shaped scar on the earth more than 600 kilometers long and up to 70 km wide, so large that it can be seen from outer space.

Baikal, which is more than 5,000 km from Moscow, accounts for an astonishing 20 percent of the world's fresh water supply. It would take all the rivers of the world nearly one year to fill the lake's basin.

Its average depth is 730 meters while its maximum depth is nearly a mile. It covers 31,500 sq. km.

A first

Aside from Macapagal and Borja, the members of the Philippine delegation were Amy Lecciones, president of the non-government Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands Inc. (SPEW), and this reporter.

Macapagal noted "the idea of joining Living Lakes started in November 1999 during Unilever's conference on Sustainable Water and Integrated Catchment Management or SWIM," held in Liverpool, England.

Unilever, LLDA and SPEW forged a partnership creating a body that pursued the lake's membership bid.

Called Clear (Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources), the tripartite body aims "to ensure the acceptance and continuity of efforts in overseeing the management of Laguna de Bay as a Living Lakes partner."

Durr-Pucher of the Global Nature Fund described the tripartite arrangement a "first in the history of the Living Lakes network."

Gidon Bromberg of the Friends of the Earth-Middle East, the Dead Sea's NGO partner in Living Lakes, called the Philippine concept a "very interesting model of how the government business sector and an NGO can work together."

"At least on paper, it is a fulfillment of Agenda 21 (one of the documents signed during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro which aims, among other things, to bring together business and the ecology sectors in efforts to protect the environment)," Bromberg told the INQUIRER.

Lakes and more lakes

Living Lakes was established in June 1998 by the Germany-based Global Nature Fund and the German Environmental Aid Association (Deutsche Umwelthilfe), non-government organizations specializing in nature conservation.

GNF also plans to increase the number of World Heritage Sites within the Living Lakes network and promote a world lake vision, that is, "getting a consensus on ways to preserve and protect the world's lakes."

Living Lakes partners promote sustainable development objectives. Conference participants, for instance, discussed appropriate measures to protect the water quality of Lake Baikal.

Aside from Laguna de Bay, Lake Baikal and Lake Biwa, the Living Lakes network groups the following inland bodies of water: Lake Constance in Germany, Switzerland and Austria; Columbia Wetlands in Canada; the Dead Sea in Israel, Palestine and Jordan;

Laguna Fuquene in Colombia; Laguna La Nava in Spain; Lake Tengiz in Kazakhstan; Lake Uluabat in Turkey; Mahakam Lakes in Indonesia; Mar Chiquita in Argentina; Milicz Ponds in Poland;

Mono Lake in Lee Vining, California; Nestos Lake in Greece; Norfolk and Suffolk Broads in the United Kingdom; and Pantanal in Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay.

All these lake regions are "vulnerable to environmental pollution," according to a Living Lakes report.

Founded in June 1998, the network plans to put up a worldwide network of 30 to 40 lakes in the next four years, with "special focus on arid and semi-arid areas of the globe."

Gulag archipelago

Aside from Buryatia, Eastern Siberia groups the Republic of Sakha and the regions of Irkutsk, Chitinskaya and Amurskaya.

For generations, this immense backyard, which makes up more than 75 percent of Russia's land mass, had been used, first by the tsars and then by the Soviet regime, to dispose of undesirable elements in the infamous Gulag (Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerey) labor camps.

The Gulag population grew from 30,000 in 1928 to about 8 million in 1938. The Gulag continued well after World War II until 1992.

In the concentration camps, life expectancy was about two years and 90 percent of the inmates did not make it out alive.

This part of the former Soviet Union briefly gained world attention in 1960 when an American U-2 spy plane was shot down over what is now Yekaterinburg as the military aircraft dared the former superpower's Pacific seaboard defenses, and again in 1983 when Korean Airlines Flight 007 was intercepted by a Russian missile and destroyed just off the island of Sakhalin.

Earlier, the region became a major center of Cold War activity, with Novaya Zemlya and Kamchatka used for thermonuclear testing.

Nuclear weapons facilities were put up at Lake Irtysh and Tomsk 7 while a huge radar station, built at Krasnoyarsk, was described by former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze (who later became president of Georgia) as the "size of the Egyptian pyramids."

Lonely planet

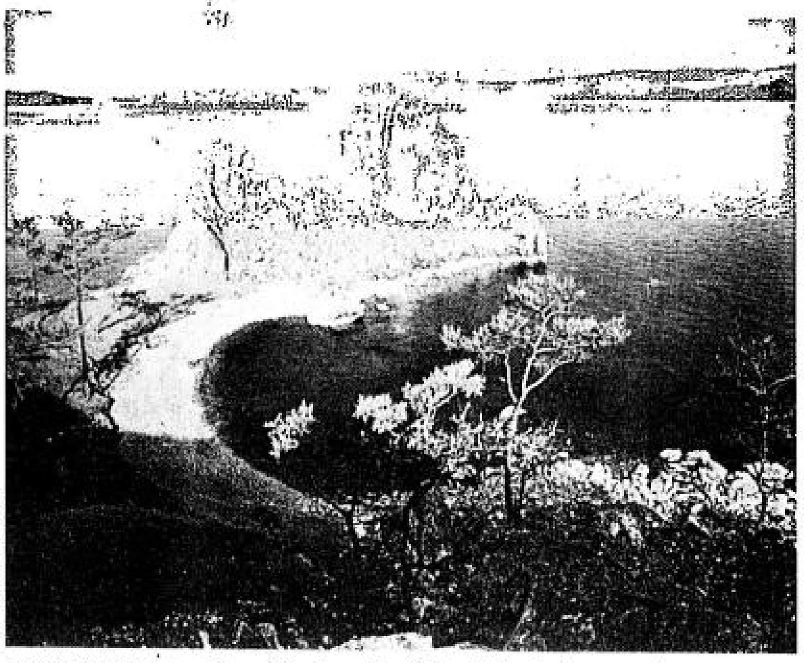
Famed among travelers for featuring the world's longest train ride, Siberia is also known for some of the planet's major natural wonders—the Altay mountains, the volcanoes and geysers of Kamchatka and unexpected pockets of non-Russian culture such as those of the Buddhist Buryats and Tuvans, or the Shamanist Yakuts.

Today, Eastern Siberia has its share of industrial development and cities, but like the rest of Siberia, remains untamed and underpopulated.

Here, the climate swings between extremes. In summer, residents swelter in temperatures of up to 35 degrees Celsius. Winter, however, is another story. According to locals, temperatures fall to a bitter minus 71 degrees Celsius as winter locks the lake in a lifeless embrace.

During our brief stay, the Siberian climate was not as fearsome as outsiders might imagine. The water temperature at the lake's surface was approximately 12 degrees Celsius, reaching 20 degrees in the offshore shallows.

By December, the lake begins to freeze and from February to April, Lake Baikal becomes the world's biggest skating rink. *(See second part of this special report in Metro section, Page A23.)*


JERRY ESPLANADA

LAKE Baikal in eastern Siberia, site of the Living Lakes conference.

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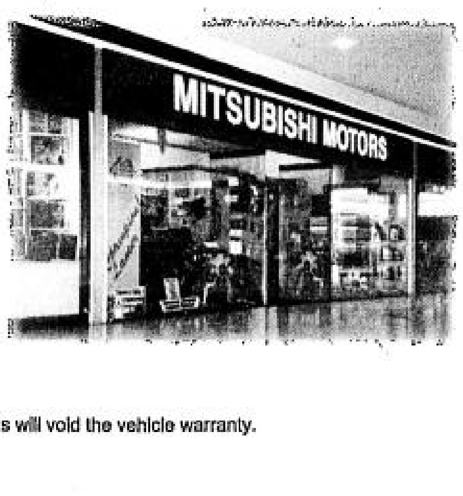

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W'Wack bounces back

DEFENDING champion Wack Wack finally broke into the win column after a 3-1 trashing of Tagaytay Highlands even as ex-titlist champion Riviera blanked Eastridge in the 2001 Federation Golf League match played over the weekend.

Wack Wack found the right combinations in Bones Floro-Ernesto Lim (best ball), Sammy Sy-Elphege Wong (aggregate) and Marlon Dizon-Boy Genato (high-low) to demolish the Highlanders.

It was a smashing return for the reigning champs after falling to Malarayat in its first outing and held to a draw by Mimosa in its next assignment in Group II.

Riviera, still smarting from a shutout loss to Southwoods in its previous match, vented its ire on a hapless Eastridge, 4-0.

The tandems of Ben Liclican-Jud Roy, Paul Salvador-June Chuidian, Popsie Paguia-Bobby Inigo and Bobby Celestino-Eric Escalona delivered the points for Riviera which reclaimed second behind Southwoods in Group I.

Forest Hills denied Malarayat a victory in its Batangas home course with a 2-2 draw. Abe Avena-Mike Carr took the scramble and Arthur Reyes-Arturo Clemente clinched the aggregate duel for Malarayat while Forest Hills levelled the score through Alfie Almario-Louie Rovera in best ball and Ronnie Littaua-Vic Cordero in high-low.

The Southwoods-Orchard and Valley-Alabang matches were postponed.

Meanwhile, Dan Salvador and Timmy Owyong took the low gross title and Lanny Javier-Rod Anabu bagged the net crown in the Orchard's Palmer re-opening tournament recently.

Other winners of the event were Conrad Benitez-Philip Gahol and Boy Crisostomo-Edgardo Reyes in Group I, Jojo Ferrer-Gerry Vergara in Group II and John Ong-William Chua in Group III.

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August Fore! comes off wraps Wednesday

NO LESS than 30 companies are answering the call for support to various Rotary charity projects as organizers of the annual August Fore! Invitational golf tournament announced that all is set for the event on Wednesday, Aug. 29, at the Wack Wack west course.

The tourney, an annual project of the Rotary Club of Diliman District 3780 and held as a tribute to PDG Melito "Bimbo" Salazar Jr., has drawn the support of Portals as major sponsor.

The other backers are Fil-Anglo, International Exchange Bank, San Miguel Corp., Nestle Phils., Jollibille Group, The Zuellig Corp., Jimmy Tang, Cathay Steel, Allied Banking Corp., ABN-Amro Bank, UCPB, LG Atkimson, SM Prime Holding, Citra MM Toll Company, Irma Fishing and Benedicto Steel, Corp.

Prizes include a Mitsubishi Lancer from Mitsubishi Motors Philippines for a hole-in-one. JVL Industrial Corp. donated appliances and Pro-Data contributed a personal computer for the raffle.

Funds raised from previous stagings of the tourney have sent 10 scholars of the Tib-Ong Foundation to La Salle-Bacolod, sent handicapped athletes from the Rotarympics project of Rotary Diliman to various competitions, supported the Home for Aged's Alay Kay Lolo at Lola and the Livelihood Training Program in Krusnaligas, Quezon City.

For inquiries, interested parties may call Global Sports at 4351943 or 4330782, look for Gary or Lyn.

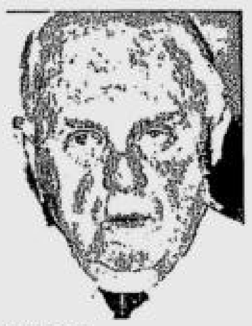
Furyk ahead by 2

AKRON, Ohio—Just when it looked like Tiger Woods might leave him behind, Jim Furyk recovered with four birdies on his final five holes Saturday for a 4-under 66 that maintained his two-stroke lead over Woods in the NEC Invitational.

Furyk now stands one round away from his second victory of the season and the biggest of his career—a World Golf Championship against 38 top players from around the globe.

Right behind is Woods, trying to become the first player to win three straight times at Firestone Country Club. *AP*

Race seminar at MJC today



HAIGH

O'CASS

TWO noted horse racing experts from Australia are currently in town to conduct a comprehensive seminar on race stewardship and the farrier industry.

Eminent Australian racing steward John Andrew Haigh and distinguished master farrier, Albert G. T. O'Cass, O.A.M., will share their expertise to local racing officials as well as aspiring stewards and farriers starting today (Aug. 27) at the Manila Jockey Club.

Haigh and O'Cass arrived recently in the country through the assistance of former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., a longtime benefactor of the local horse racing industry.

Haigh comes from a family of horsemen and has been involved in horse racing affairs for more than 50 years, having been a successful horse trainer for more than two decades before eventually becoming a Steward in 1971.

He was appointed as stipendiary steward in 1978 and was promoted to the position of chief steward of the Newcastle and Hunter Racing Association in 1982. At present, Haigh is a member of the Steward Panel of the Queensland Principal Club at the Gold Coast and supervises the conduct of at least 40 meetings per year.

Haigh considers as his expertise the training and enhancement of the racing careers of Junior Stewards, who eventually became competent Chief Stewards. Among his former proteges were Ian Peterson, Chief Steward of Macau; Michael Beattie, Chief Steward of Newcastle; Terry Bailey, Chief Steward of Gold Coast and Shane Cullen, Chief Steward of Tamworth.

O'Cass, on the other hand, is no stranger to the local horse racing industry, having previously conducted seminars and training courses for a number of local barriers since 1972. Many of those he has previously trained eventually went overseas to practice their trade and now form part of the contingent of high-income Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW's) remitting valuable foreign currency to the local economy.

Considered as the dean of the farrier trade in Australia, O'Cass was a recipient of the distinguished Order of Australia Medal (O.A.M.) in 1998.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

TENNIS: ATP Hamlet Cup Finals at 7 p.m. on Star Sports US Open 2001, Men's and Women's First Round at 10:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: 2001 WNBA Conference Finals Game 2 at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: Golfglobe 2001 at 9 a.m. (r) on Star Sports Senior PGA Ford Senior Players Championships, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r – 8:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Williams subdues Davenport

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut—Tuning up to defend her US Open title, Venus Williams beat Lindsay Davenport 7-6 (6), 6-4 Saturday to win the Pilot Pen tournament for the third straight year. "I hate to lose. I guess I don't like going into the Open with a loss," said Williams, who became the first woman with three consecutive titles at this 34-year-old tournament, formerly known as the US Hardcourt Championships. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▣ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Verde Island tourney slated

THE VERDE Island Resort fish identification competition will be held on Sept. 1 and 2. Entry fee is P3,500 which include room accommodation with aircon, four meals and four dives. Sponsored by Scubaworld, the competition will be aired every Friday from 11-11:30 p.m.l over NBN Channel 4. For registration, please call 920-8505 or cell no. 0917-9368895. Participants will have a chance to win resort accommodation and featured on TV Diving.

The real winner

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

NEVER-SAY-DIE Batang Red Bull won its first Philippine basketball Association title last Friday night, but the real winner of the stunning victory could very well be the legion of future sports fans.

Before one of the biggest crowd ever to watch the PBA Commissioner's Cup, import Tony Lang, bouncing back from a lackluster performance the previous Wednesday night; Fil-Am, Davonn Harp, one-time MVP Ato Agustin and vastly-improved Junthy Valenzuela sparked hard-fighting Batang Red Bull to a dramatic 75-69 victory over defending champion and highly favored San Miguel Beer to clinch the crown.

The amazing feat denied the Beermen of their bid for a second grand slam and gave the Photokina franchise its own version of a grand slam after it beat three sister teams in the PBA-Ginebra (quarterfinals), Purefoods (semifinals) and San Miguel Beer in the best-of-seven title series via a 4-2 score. More importantly, the stirring triumph assured the fans of an even higher level of performance not only from Batang Red Bull but from the other PBA teams as well.

"The team has proven that it could do more than simply with games; that it could also win the respect and appreciation of millions of basketball fans by playing their best to please the public," said Red Bull owner George Chua afterward. "The players played the game of their lives."

"The victory was fulfilling," said a teary-eyed coach Yeng Guiao. "We had record crowds watching the championship series and thousands of jubilant supporters joining us in the all-night celebration (at Café Provencal at SM Megamall). In my 17 years of coaching in both the amateur and professional ranks, I have never seen anything like this." It was the third PBA title for the 42-year-old Guiao, who also coached Swift Mighty Meaty to victory in 1992 and 1993.

In Game 6 last Friday night, the clincher came in the last 12.1 seconds when steel-nerved Agustin sank twin charities and back-to-normal Lang, added another, with 7.7 remaining, to seal the championship. The 28-year-old Lang, the conference's best Import awardee, tallied 26 big points for the night to make up for his horrendous performance in Game 5 when the former Duke University standout and NBA veteran scored only four points.

At present, Red Bull is honing for the season-ending Governors' Cup which begins on Sunday, Sept. 9. The team won third place in this conference last year. For this season, prize import Raymond "King" Tutt, a 6-foot-4 scoring machine, is back to carry the Thunder colors once more.

RITUALO SIZZLES

La Salle downs UP, keeps UAAP lead

STANDINGS

	W	L		W	L
La Salle	9	1	UE	5	5
Ateneo	7	2	UST	4	5
NU	5	4	UP	3	7
FEU	5	5	Adamson	0	9

BY DENNIS U. EROA

REN Ren Ritualo, La Salle's "Mr. Houdini," authored another escape act as the four-peat seeking Green Archers subdued the University of the Philippines Maroons, 85-79, fortifying their hold of the solo leadership in the UAAP men's basketball tournament yesterday at the Loyola Gym.

The steel-nerved Ritualo, whose penchant for making the crucial shots is the envy of many, reprised his favorite role as he buried a long triple which snuffed the lives out of the fighting Maroons in the final one minute and 36 seconds of play.

Before Ritualo's magical shot which had the green and white gallery roaring in delight, UP's Mike Bravo took the spotlight as he tied the ball game, 76-76, capping the Maroons comeback from 22 points down, 43-65.

La Salle upped its league-leading mark to 9-1, followed by Ateneo at 7-2 and National University at 5-4. In the other senior game, University of the East leaned on Arnold Booker's hot hands to hand Far Eastern U its fourth straight loss, 68-63. Both UE and FEU are tied at 5-5 as the battle for Final Four slots heats up.

"We still lack the killer's instinct. UP's a pesky team," said La Salle mentor Franz Pumaren, who again defended rookie sensation Mark Cardona regarding questions on his eligibility. "We don't falsify records. Cheating isn't our business. Mark is not bothered by questions on his eligibility and I remain amused by this inquiry," Pumaren said.

Cardona was all over the court, shooting his trademark looping hook shots and harassing the Maroons with his in-your face defense en route to 25 points. Mike Cortez also shone as he finished with a tournament-high 14 assists, the last two led to easy baskets for Cardona and Willy Wilson which iced La Salle's win, 83-76, 1:18 left.

The win was a fitting welcome to team manager Terry Capistrano, who arrived hours before the match from a business trip in Singapore. "The win boosts my energy and lifts my spirit. Everybody contributed to the victory."

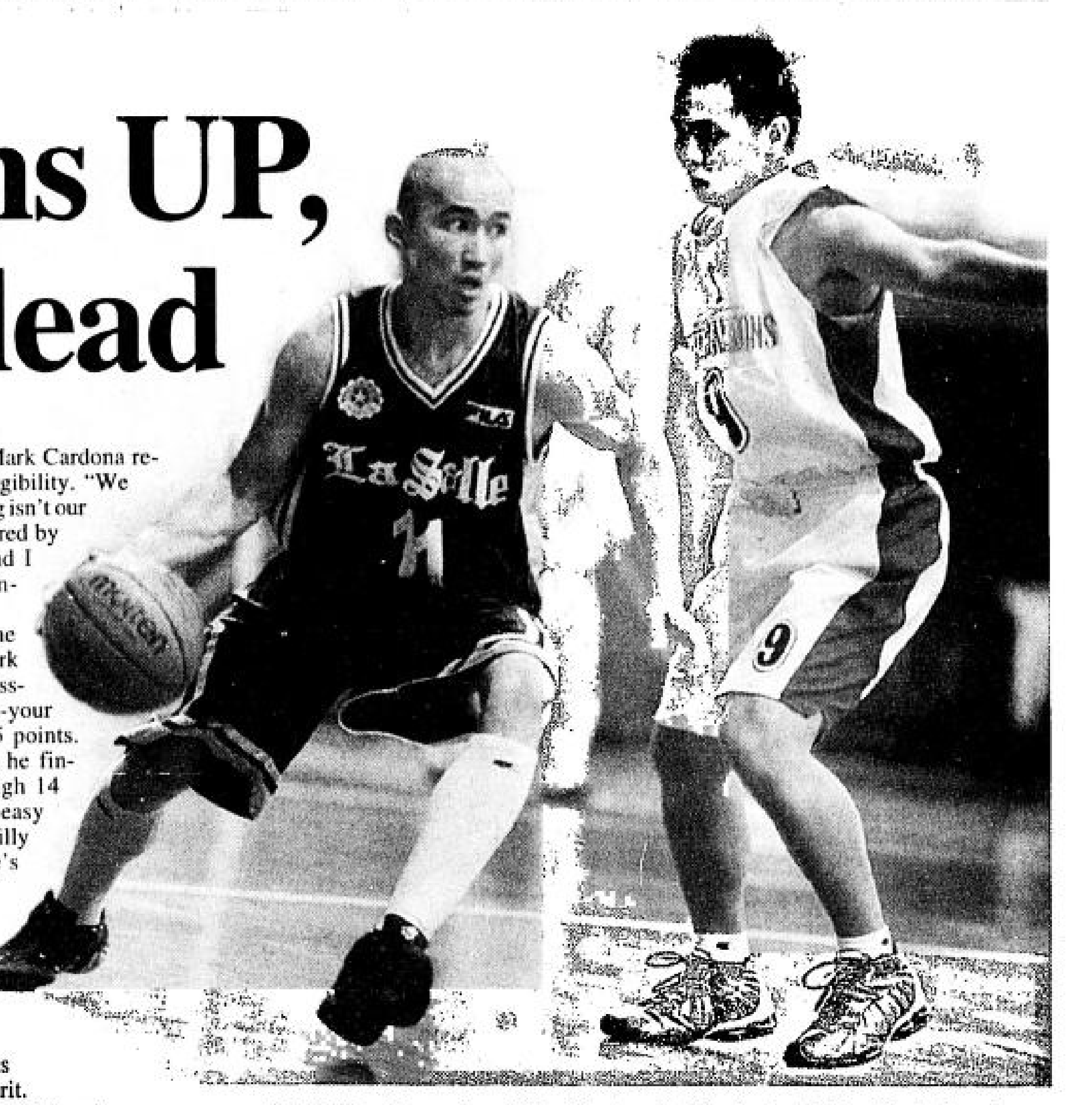
Meanwhile, board member Gilda Uy told a hastily organized press conference that the UAAP will get the academic records of Cardona from Carson High within the week.

Scores:

LA SALLE 85—Cardona 25, Ritualo 24, Cortez 11, Wilson 8, Sharma 5, Manalo 3, Ramos 3, Yeo 2, Sta. Maria 2, Gavino 2, Gozum 0.

UP 79—Bravo 27, Madarang 12, Anaiz 11, Cervantes 8, Bornancin 6, Celo 5, Robin 3, Jomalesa 3, Ferrer 2, Nunag 1, Santos 1, Almeda 0.

Quarters: 24-11, 47-37, 69-54, 85-79



LA Salle playmaker Mike Cortez (left) eludes UP's Mark Jomalesa. The Green Archers won, 85-79. ROMY HOMILLADA

Benilde whips UPHR

GAMES TODAY:
(Rizal Memorial)
12nn—JRU vs PCU
(jrs/srs)
3 p.m.—SSC vs Letran
(jrs/srs)

DEFENDING champion College of St. Benilde continued its rise from the pits with a runaway 76-63 victory over University of Perpertual Help-Rizal yesterday in NCAA basketball at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The Blazers exploited PBL MVP Chester Tolomia's incapacity in the final stretch and protected their fort the rest of the way to notch their fourth win in nine outings.

Mapua climbed to solo second after beating tailender San Beda College, 68-66, in the other varsity game.

The Cardinals picked up their sixth win in nine games while the Red Lions plunged to 1-8. *J.N.*

RP 4th

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan—Manpower woes told on the Philippines-FedEx team Friday night as it yielded to Russian Army, 81-71, and settled for fourth in the 24th William Jones Cup at the Fen Sheng Stadium here.

Chinese dominate badminton

HIGHLY-TOUTED China captured three of the five titles disputed in the finals, sweeping the singles events and humbling crowd favorite Indonesia in the ladies doubles at the close of the $150,000 JVC Asian Badminton Championships at the Philsports Arena.

Zhang Ning shocked top seed Wang Chen of Hong Kong to win the ladies singles, 11-1, 11-3; Zia Zuan Ze foiled compatriot Lin Dan in the men's side, 15-10, 15-9, while the world-rated team of Gao Ling and Huang Sui stopped the crowd favorite pair of Deyana Lomban and Vita Marissa of Indonesia, 12-15, 15-4, 15-6, to snare the ladies doubles plum.

South Korea won the mixed doubles crown behind its fancied duo of Kim Dong Moon and Ra Kyung Kim, who bounced back from an opening game loss by routing the Indon tandem of Bambang Suprianto and Minarti Timur, 11-15, 15-4, 15-3. While China won in three of four events it competed in the finals, Indonesia settled for one—the men's doubles—in an all-Indon finale still being played at presstime.

18-hole tilt launches GDAP show

THE SIXTH edition of the Philippine International Golf Show will be launched via an 18-hole golf tournament on Tuesday, Sept. 4 at the west course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The active members of GDAP together with exhibitors, sponsors, special guests and invited mediamen will compete for the prizes at stake, according to tournament committee chair Raffy Antonio.

Tee-off starts at 7 a.m. after the opening ceremonials to be led by GDAP president Raymund Atendido.

The Golf Show, one of the biggest in Asia, will be held on Oct. 5-7 at SM Megamall with the participation of the popular equipment, apparel and accessory brands in the golf industry as well as construction giants, dot.com companies and golf travel.

Already committing their support as sponsors are Jack Nicklaus apparel, Hawaiian Tropic, Planet Sports, Srixon, Casino Filipino, Berocca, Milo Enervon Prime, Lipton Ice Tea, Taytan International and Earthinshape.com.

Atendido said that the return of the golf tournament to the pre-Show activities was made possible by popular demand from those directly involved in the event.

"We intend to use the event as a way to launch the show and at the same time update our exhibitors and supporters with the preparations being made," said Atendido.

Winners of the tournament will be honored during the show.

The participation of the United States Commercial Service and the full cooperation of the Department of Tourism are seen to turn the show into one of the grandest in recent years.

Product launches, educational seminars and promotional gimmicks will spice up the show. The initial list of exhibitors already includes at least 50 different companies.

For inquiries, contact Tradex Specialist—the official event manager- at 438-1848, 421-0779 and 438-7821 or visit the official website of the event at www.philippineinternationalgolfshow.com.

Las Piñas 5- stag derby on

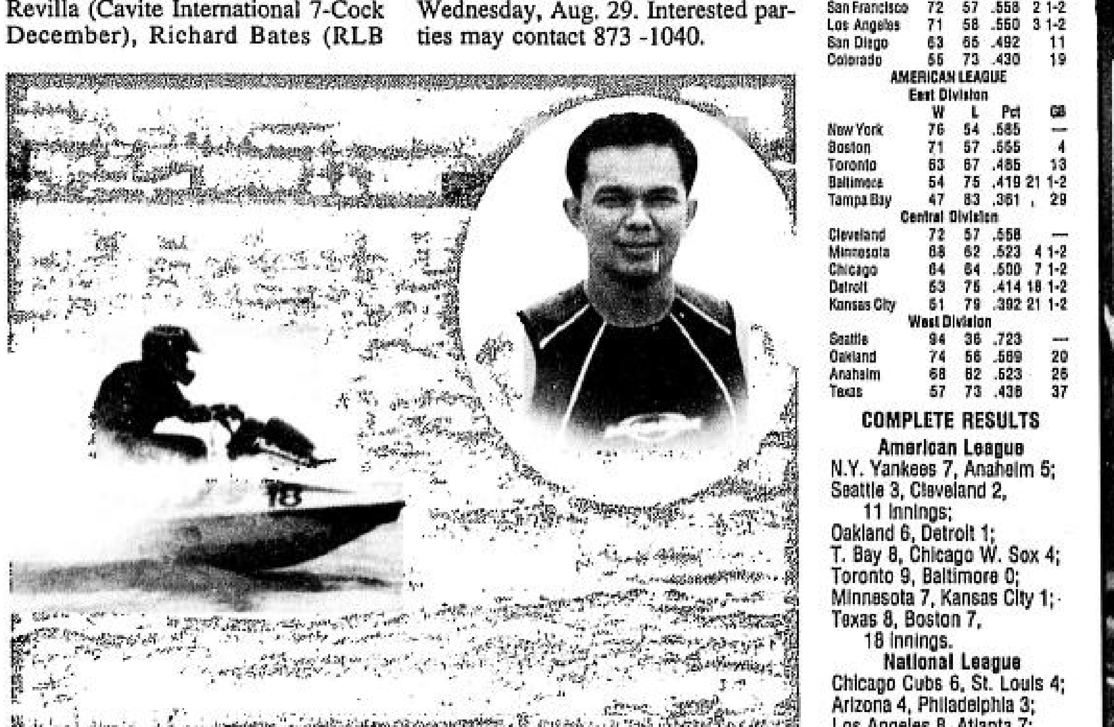
WHO among the country's gamefowl breeders have successfully produced the winning lines for the 2001 stagfighting season?

This will be partly answered today as 68 participants clash in the Annual LPC 5-Stag Derby at the Las Piñas Cockpit beginning at 6 p.m. Major sponsor is Pagcor-Casino Filipino.

The early favorites in today's elimination round (2-stag) include Sen. Ramon Revilla and son Bong Revilla (Cavite International 7-Cock December), Richard Bates (RLB 7-Stag Aug. 28), Pasay Anniversary champ Gerry Ramos (Black Panther), Danny Ty and Boy de Roca (Show-down Sept. 3), Cito Zamesa (Aling Gloria), Alex Tobias (Alexis I and II), Johnny Elorde (Elorde Cockpit), Roger del Rosalie (Cavite) and Cito Manansala (Pasay).

Proceeds of this fund-raising sports affair will go to various community projects of Mayor Nene Aguilar.

The finals (3-stag) blasts off on Wednesday, Aug. 29. Interested parties may contact 873 -1040.



ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Ferdinand Pulmones is shown in action during the 2001 Petron Jet Ski National Series recently. Pulmones, of Pagadian City, bagged the Rookie of the Year award.

BASEBALL RESULTS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	70	58	.547	—
Philadelphia	69	59	.539	1
Florida	61	67	.477	9
New York	60	69	.465	10 1-2
Montreal	55	74	.426	15 1-2
Central Division				
Houston	74	55	.574	
Chicago	71	58	.550	3
St. Louis	70	59	.543	4
Milwaukee	57	71	.445	16 1-2
Cincinnati	52	77	.403	22
Pittsburgh	48	80	.375	25 1-2
West Division				
Arizona	74	54	.578	
San Francisco	72	57	.558	2 1-2
Los Angeles	71	58	.550	3 1-2
San Diego	63	65	.492	11
Colorado	55	73	.430	19

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	76	54	.585	—
Boston	71	57	.555	4
Toronto	63	67	.485	13
Baltimore	54	75	.419	21 1-2
Tampa Bay	47	83	.361	29
Central Division				
Cleveland	72	57	.558	—
Minnesota	68	62	.523	4 1-2
Chicago	64	64	.500	7 1-2
Detroit	53	75	.414	18 1-2
Kansas City	51	79	.392	21 1-2
West Division				
Seattle	94	36	.723	—
Oakland	74	56	.569	20
Anaheim	68	62	.523	26
Texas	57	73	.438	37

COMPLETE RESULTS

American League

N.Y. Yankees 7, Anaheim 5;
Seattle 3, Cleveland 2, 11 Innings;
Oakland 6, Detroit 1;
T. Bay 8, Chicago W. Sox 4;
Toronto 9, Baltimore 0;
Minnesota 7, Kansas City 1;
Texas 8, Boston 7, 18 Innings.

National League

Chicago Cubs 6, St. Louis 4;
Arizona 4, Philadelphia 3;
Los Angeles 8, Atlanta 7;
Pittsburgh 8, Houston 2;
Milwaukee 5, Colorado 4;
Cincinnati 4, Montreal 2;
San Diego 7, Florida 1;
N.Y. Mets 3, San Francisco 2, 11 Innings *AP*

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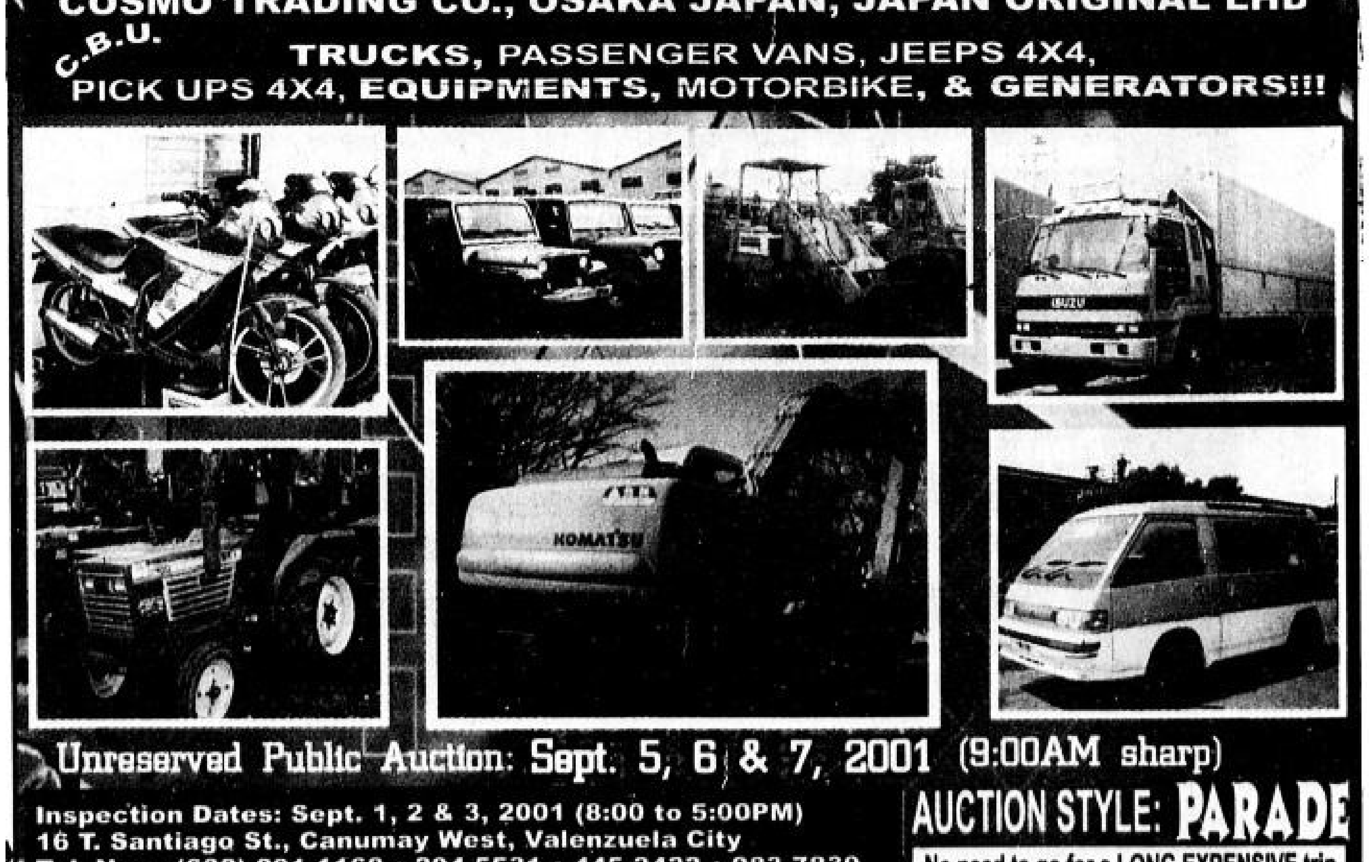

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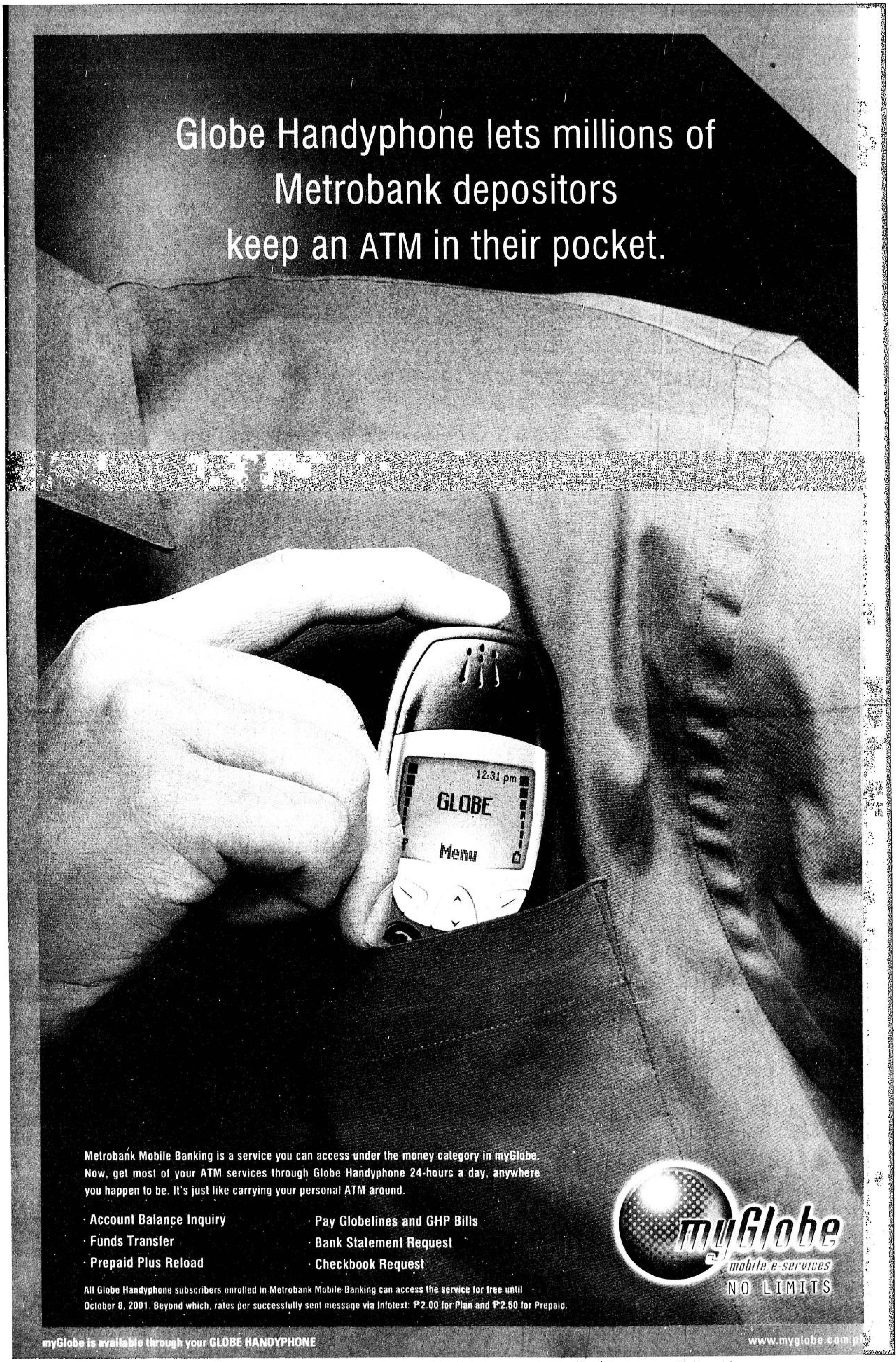
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Lethal injection for daughter's rapist A25
Convince cell phone firms to stop cuts in free text messages—Oreta A25

CPD anti-carnap head, kin fall in bribe trap

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE FIGHT against the rising number of car thefts in Quezon City, now known as the country's "carnap capital," received a big blow Saturday. The head of the Central Police District (CPD) anti-carnapping (Ancar) unit was accused of taking bribes right inside the CPD headquarters.

The head of the CPD Ancar unit, Chief Insp. Emmanuel Bautista, yesterday was charged with robbery/extortion before the Quezon City prosecutor's office after he and several other men, including one who is said to be his nephew, were caught in an entrapment operation right inside Camp Karingal in Sikatuna Village, Quezon City Saturday night.

Bautista was accused of taking P30,000 from Glen Bihag, 33, liaison officer of GLM Manpower and resident of Pasay City, who was earlier caught with a stolen Toyota XL (UCK-140), according to investigator SPO1 Danilo Tan of the CPD district intelligence unit.

Included in the charge sheet were Insp. Manrio Pascual, the Ancar operations chief; PO3 Genaro Blasorca, Ancar desk officer; and Bautista's reported nephew, Manny Bautista, 29.

Bihag told investigators that he was looking for a car when his friend introduced him to a certain Joseph Canares, who allegedly offered the Toyota to him.

But while Canares and Bihag were allegedly preparing the car's papers at the Land Transportation Office in Quezon City, Chief Inspector Bautista and his nephew caught Bihag inside the car.

They brought Bihag to the Ancar office on the first floor of the CPD headquarters in Camp Karingal.

There, Blasorca allegedly told Bihag he could pay P30,000 instead of paying the P300,000 fine for being caught in a hot car.

Bihag claimed that Pascual also "negotiated" for the price of his release.

But Bihag said he had only P6,000 with him and so he called up his wife to raise the rest, or P24,000. Unknown to the policemen, Bihag also called up Clifford Elorde, a People's Tonight reporter, to ask for help.

Elorde in turn asked for help from Chief Insp. Anthony Rodolfo, DPIU chief, and Supt. Pierre Bucsit, CPD intelligence and investigation division chief.

Tan said the entrapment operation was set for 10 p.m. Saturday at the Ancar office.

He said Chief Inspector Bautista's alleged nephew received the money inside a toilet. When DPIU and DIID agents pounced on the suspects, the younger Bautista still had the money with him at the Ancar office. Chief Insp. Bautista was also in the office, Tan said.

Pascual and Blasorca were also arrested and all the four suspects were locked up later in the DPIU detention cell, Tan added.

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Laguna de Bay now watched by international community

BY JERRY ESPLANADA

(Last of two parts. First part on Page 1.)

SPECIAL REPORT

ULAN UDE, Eastern Siberia—*Kanduli. Biya. Dulong. Tulya. Tagak.*

They are not part of the Russian vocabulary. Like the water lily and the carabao, they belong to the rich biodiversity of the sick but still vibrant Laguna de Bay.

In a poster presentation at the Hall of the Parliament here, the capital of the Buryatia Republic, more than 160 participants in the sixth Living Lakes international conference learned about these and other interesting features of the Philippines' largest lake.

Like, being host to 29 other fish species, 154 species of phytoplankton, 24 species of macrophytes and 36 species of zooplankton, among others, and having a watershed area of 2,920 square kilometers. Or, that the lake has 21 tributaries with an aggregate length of 462 kilometers and that its basin covers not only 42 towns but also seven cities, including Manila, the Philippine capital.

The Philippine delegation, which included Lennie Santos-Borja, head of the research and development division of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), did not hide the fact that Laguna de Bay is "already shallow (with an average depth of 2.8 meters compared to six to eight meters 40 years ago) caused mainly by heavy siltation and environmental pollution," a problem shared by many lakes and other inland bodies of water worldwide.

But the group also had good news for fellow Living Lakes delegates: The 90,000-

LAGUNA/ A26

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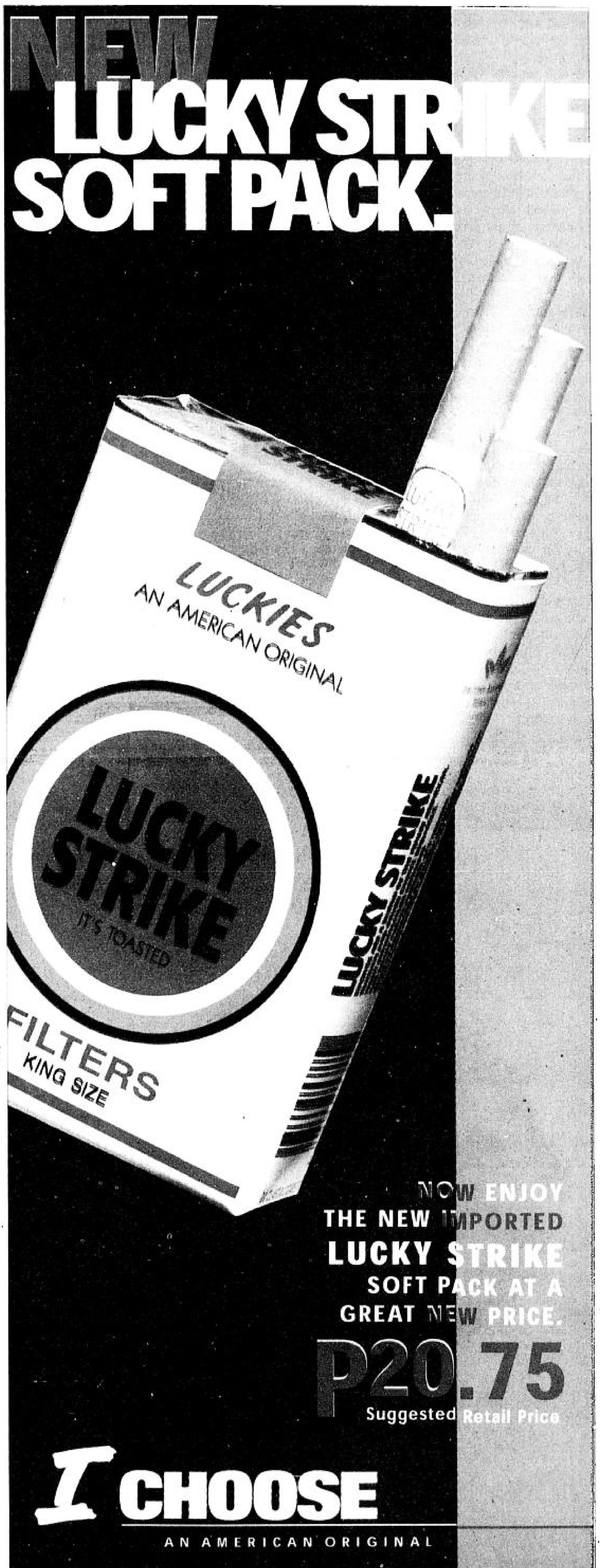

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Dead baby dumped outside church

By Philip C. Tubeza

INSTEAD of eggs, the traditional offering at Santa Clara church and monastery in Quezon City, two unidentified women yesterday left behind the body of a full-term baby girl.

Police said parishioners of the church on Aurora Boulevard and Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City were shocked at the discovery of the dead baby in front of the church.

Investigator PO2 Joseph Dino of the Central Police District-Criminal Investigation Unit said two unidentified women left the box containing the dead baby on Saturday.

Witness Antonio Gonzales told police that the women tied the box to a steel pole in front of the church and then left quickly in a taxi cab at 8:25 p.m. Saturday, police said.

Gonzales said he was curious about the women's behavior and decided to check the contents of the box after they left. When he opened the box, Gonzales said he was stunned to find in it the body of a baby girl wrapped in linen.

He said he reported his discovery to the Project 4 police station. The body was brought to the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory for safekeeping.

Santa Clara church is famous among Catholics who believe that offering eggs to the patron saint would assure good weather during an outdoor activity.

Nuns at the monastery use the eggs to make pies and pray for the intentions of the petitioners. Believers say the nuns' prayers always work.

A race to save Luisito Espinosa from undue harm

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THERE is nothing fresh or new in what I'm going to sound off here. It's an old appeal for the health and safety of a former Filipino world boxing champion. This same plea has been printed here and in other newspapers more than a couple of times before.

Anyway, Hermie Rivera, maker of champions, swears that Luisito Espinosa should by now be retired and doing something tamer.

But last heard of, Espinosa, 34, overweight, was sweating it out, training hard in a California gym for a tough assignment tentatively scheduled in September.

Hermie swears Luisito, whom he had treated like a son, should be resting on his laurels. Espinosa, after all, had reigned as champion in two world divisions—WBA bantamweight and WBC featherweight —a feat unequalled in RP boxing annals.

"You know how I feel about his (Espinosa's) need to go back to the square jungle," Hermie wrote me last week, "but it seems that's the only option for him at this time."

Hermie says he's racing against time. Reason: Espinosa is definitely way past his prime and would be endangering his life fighting again, but the poor guy has no choice. Luisito needs instant cash to feed his two kids and pay apartment rent in Daly City.

* * *

A little flashback: Hermie came upon Espinosa, son of a waiter at the Malacañang Palace during the Marcos era, as a tall, thin and very raw out-of-school youth from the slums of Tondo.

It It took Hermie, in a team-up with the late Toti Sangalang, years to chisel off the raw edges and make a gem out of Luisito, a dusky bamboo gatherer with eyes of live coal.

Then one day in 1989, we just heard that Luisito, who was hurriedly pushed into the WBA ratings, had been lined up to fight for the WBA bantamweight crown. The fight site was Bangkok, not necessarily the most hospitable capital for foreign boxers seeking a world crown.

At best, Espinosa was labeled an obscure underdog in the humid Thai capital. He, after all, had been tapped to fight Kaokhor Galaxy, the other half of Siamese brothers who both owned a world boxing crown.

* * *

Hermie says he will never forget Luisito's thunderclap blows that sent the cocky, overrated Kaokhor slumped senseless against the ropes in just 90 seconds of the first round.

The killer combination was so swift the cameras failed to catch and register its magnificence.

In fact, the late Joe Cantada, who did the off-tube annotation in Manila, could only blink in amazement after Luisito next exulted and exploded, without even waiting for the referee to make the official announcement.

We did try to decipher the fight tapes but, try as we did, we could only marvel at the invisible phantom punch.

We had a full two hours of TV time to fill up but Smokin' Joe, with his inborn magic touch, made what could've been empty moments very memorable for hometown fans.

Luisito, if I remember right, did not go home to Manila after the exhilarating triumph.

He instead returned to San Jose, California, his training quarters from where he moved out for the crown quest.

Still, he became the talk of the town hereabouts. He was also nicknamed Lindol, earthquake, by no less than National Artist Nick Joaquin, because the young champ happened to have scored that demolition in Bangkok about the same time a major temblor rocked Manila and devastated a great part of Northern Luzon.

* * *

He should not be fighting again, Hermie repeats with visible alarm. The guy has had enough of the inhuman rigors, not to mention the savagery in and out of the boxing ring.

Luisito should be taking a hard-earned break. Unfortunately, there's only one way he knows how to earn—with his fists.

Louie's wife, Maricherie, has reportedly been very busy negotiating for Louie to fight again. But, so far, Hermie reports, Espinosa has agreed to abide by the terms set by his current handler. The handler's name: Noel Rivera, Hermie's eldest boy.

If he fights again, Hermie says, there are only two possibilities: Luisito could win, or he could get hurt seriously.

Hermie Rivera says he does not want to gamble. He's for Luisito hanging his gloves. And he's pinning his last hope on the new head man at the Games and Amusements Board.

Hermie has handed me this letter, an appeal which continues to be denied by authorities. Kindly share it:

"It would do well for the new GAB chair to be reminded that the Filipino people who took pride in Espinosa's ring achievements, unmatched by any Filipino, owe him that much. After all, Chairman Eduardo Villanueva's predecessor had caused this problem of non-collection through his mishandling of that memorable promotion won resoundingly by Espinosa via a 6th round knockout of the gutsy Carlos Rios in Koranadal. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, when reached, instructed Interior Secretary Joey Lina to find ways of solving the problem. However, the principal culprit, Larry de Pedro, is no longer a government official. So how can we collect the overdue amount? He should not be fighting again but this is the only option left for Louie at this point. I don't know how. Maybe we can avail of the help of our friend Gov. Manny Piñol of North Cotabato? We've got to do something. I fear for Louie. He should not be made to fight again."

Hermie says De Pedro, ex-governor of South Cotabato, still owes Espinosa a total of $150,000 but it seems not even the President could compel him to pay.

Of course, Hermie is not one to turn to the NPA for a solution. Or should he?

Japanese trader robbed in Ermita

A 53-YEAR-OLD Japanese businessman lost more than P50,000 in cash to three men who snatched his clutch bag while he was walking out of his hotel in Ermita, Manila before dawn yesterday.

Testsuo Nishimura, a native of Tokyo, Japan, was with his friend Marisol Bien, 21, when the three men, who were on board a motorcycle, blocked their path, police said.

One of the suspects grabbed the clutch bag and the motorcycle sped to the north.

Nishimura told SPO1 Jacinto Amor of the Western Police District general assignments section that he has been staying at the Diamond for the past week. He said he was in the country to oversee a business transaction and to visit Bien.

He said the clutch bag contained 100,000 yen or about P42,000, another P10,000 in cash, a passport, a plane ticket and other important documents.

Jerome Aning

TRAFFIC CHIEF

Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. congratulates Police Supt. Luisito Maralit on the latter's appointment as Metro Manila commander of the traffic units of the Philippine National Police and of the MMDA. Maralit immediately ordered increased visibility for traffic policemen and traffic enforcers on the streets of the metropolis.

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Lethal injection for daughter's rapist

By Agnes E. Donato

A PASIG City court has sentenced to death by lethal injection a man who raped his teenage daughter seven years ago in Mandaluyong City.

Judge Mariano Singzon of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 67 found the man, 41, of Pililia, Rizal, guilty of rape and ordered him to pay his daughter P100,000 in moral damages.

In a seven-page decision, Singzon gave weight to the victim's "vivid description and candid and unwavering narration" during the trial of the rape charges.

Court records showed that the rape occurred on April 5, 1995 at the victim's residence in Mandaluyong City.

The victim, who was only 15 years old then, was reportedly alone with a brother and their father. Their mother had gone to work.

During the trial, the girl told the court that her father called her inside his room and asked her to give him a massage. But when the girl was starting to massage him, the father allegedly began to undress her and then proceeded to rape her.

The victim added that her father threatened to kill her if she told anyone about what he did to her.

The girl kept quiet for more than a year, fearing that her father would carry out his threat if she talked about the rape.

The girl's mother only learned about the rape on May 2, 1995 when a sister-in-law told the mother that the victim had been "touched" by her father.

The mother confronted her daughter, who broke down and told her mother about her ordeal.

Medico-legal findings confirmed the girl's allegations of rape.

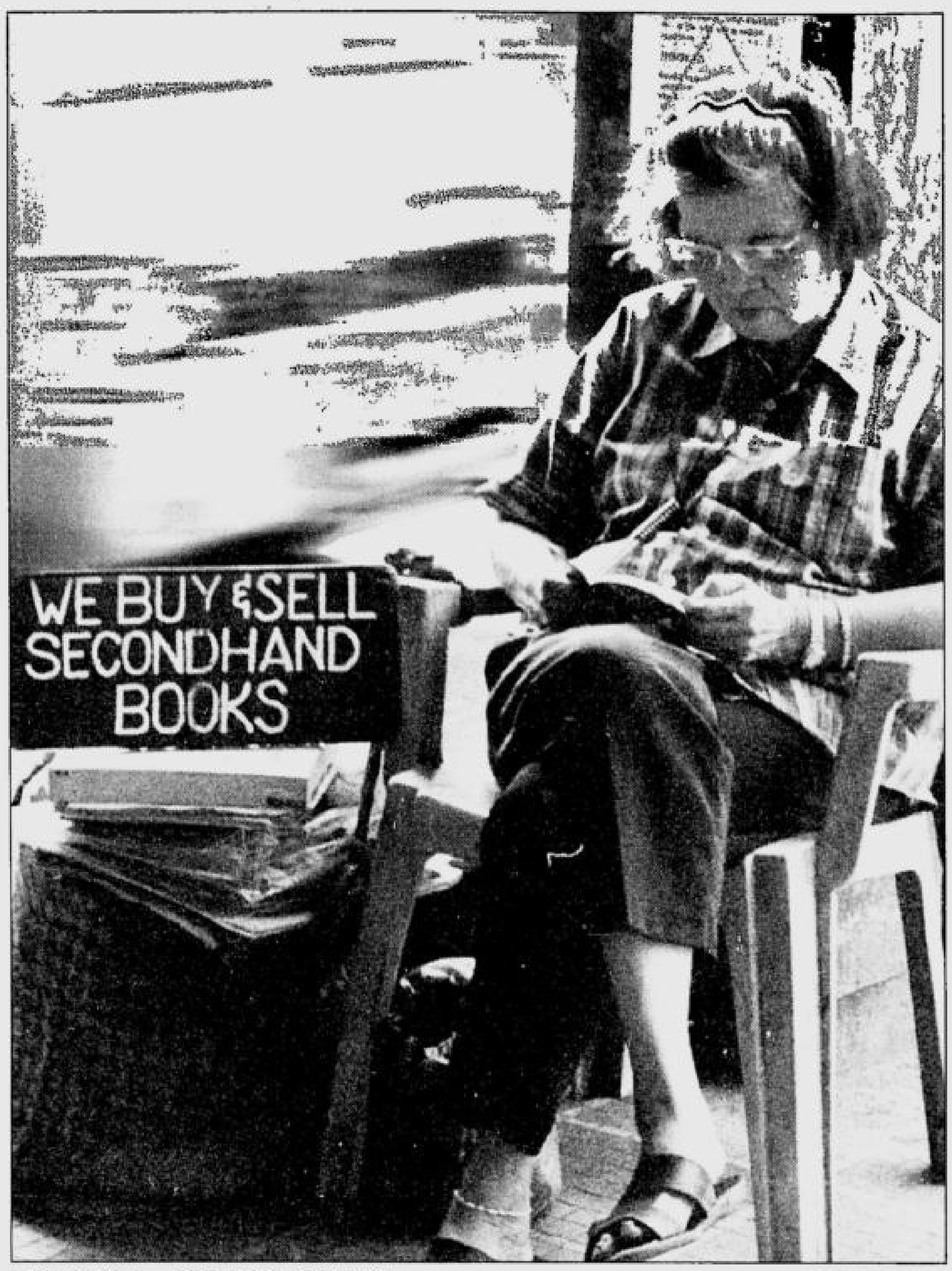
In defense, the father claimed that he was not at the house in Mandaluyong, where the girl and his first wife were living, at the time of the rape.

This was corroborated by his second wife, who claimed that he had been staying with her in Barangay Buting, Pasig City and that she gave birth to their twins on the day of the rape.

The father also argued that his first wife and his daughter only made up the charges against him because they were furious over his having another family.

Judge Singzon maintained that the man's alibi was weak, as opposed to the narration of the victim.

"It is well settled that an alibi is an inherently weak defense which could easily be fabricated," the judge said. "It cannot prevail over positive identification."



NO STALL, NO VIOLATION TONY MACASINAG

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has prohibited book vendors' stands along C. M. Recto Avenue, but this woman continues to sell second-hand books on the sidewalk by going around the ban. She has only a chair, a sign and a stack of used volumes but no vendor's stall.

Convince cell phone firms to stop cuts on free text messages—Oreta

OPPOSITION Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta is urging the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to exert "moral suasion" on mobile phone operators to convince them to reconsider their move to drastically cut the free SMS or text messages allocation for their subscribers.

On Friday, Oreta said several consumer groups have expressed concern that Globe Telecom, Smart Communications,,Piltel and Isla Communications may have acted in a "cartel fashion" when they simultaneously announced the slash in free text messages for both their prepaid and postpaid subscribers.

"The telecommunications industry may be deregulated and the free text messages may be part of the promotion of these cell phone companies, but judging from the complaints aired by consumer groups, it is obvious that the NTC should do something about this," Oreta said in a statement.

"The NTC could perhaps use its moral suasion over these mobile phone companies to persuade them not to push through with their move."

Earlier, she pointed out that the plan of mobile phone operators to abruptly cut by 66 percent the number of free text messages allocated for their subscribers was unnecessary because these firms have been raking in billions of pesos in profits from the cell phone boom in the country.

ORETA

She asked why telecommunications giants Globe, Smart, Piltel and Islacom need to cut text message allocations for their combined 8 million subscribers by two-thirds when they appear to be making a killing from the sale of cell phones and wireless services.

Even the Department of Trade and Industry has reported that the big-ticket items responsible for the 400 percent surge in business ventures were the expansion plans of Globe, Smart and other telecommunications companies, Oreta noted.

She said that before resorting to this highly profitable move, cell phone companies should first improve their services, given the mounting complaints on their deteriorating services. "Instead of allowing these cell phone companies to cut back their free text message allocations to their subscribers, the government should even impose taxes on this service which has raked in millions of pesos in profits for Globe, Smart and other mobile phone operators," Oreta said.

Earlier, she filed Senate Bill No. 859 seeking the imposition of a 10 percent tax over and above the value-added tax paid by cellular phone companies. The tax shall be collected over a period of five years and shall be used to exclusively fund "programs, projects and activities of the Department of Education in the promotion of computer education in public schools primarily in the elementary and secondary levels."

Under Oreta's proposal, the special computer literacy education fund shall be borne solely by cellular phone service providers. These companies, however, shall be prohibited from imposing additional charges or fees on their subscribers as a way to offset contributions to the fund.

Round-the-clock watch over Lipa City shabu

POLICE Chief Supt. Domingo Reyes Jr., Philippine National Police regional director for Southern Tagalog, has ordered a round-the-clock watch over the 58.55 kilos of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu seized in a production plant in Lipa City last April 28.

Reyes gave the order to the director of the 4th Regional Mobile Group (RMG), Supt. Marcelo Manalo, and the Camp Vicente Lim commander, Supt. Ernesto Cuizon, to prevent the pilferage of the illegal drugs even as he welcomed the reported conduct of investigation of the alleged mishandling of the drugs.

Earlier, he recommended the burning of the shabu under the supervision of the Dangerous Drugs Board to prevent the stuff from falling into the hands of unscrupulous people.

According to published reports, unidentified persons in the trial court in Lipa City have cast doubts on the actual volume of shabu which was presented in court as evidence. Only 58.55 kilos were declared in court, contrary to earlier reports that about 1,000 kilos were presented as evidence.

Suspicions have thus been raised that the seized shabu had been mishandled.

But Reyes clarified that the 1,000 kilos or even more was just a police estimate prior to the official inventory by the 4th PNP Crime Laboratory under Chief Inspector Ligaya Cabal.

Cabal reported to Reyes that the official amount was 53.55 kilos found in a hut, with five kilos more found in the vehicle of the mastermind.

Cabal added that if the nearly processed shabu that was also seized was included, the amount would reach 1,000 kilos or maybe even more.

2 men slain by pal, toughies

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO young men were killed, one by a group of toughies and the other by his own friend, in two incidents in Manila on Saturday and yesterday.

Student Raymundo Vallejo, 19, was driving a pedicab along Lakandula Street, Tondo when he was stabbed dead by one of several toughies creating trouble in the area around 3 a.m. yesterday, said PO3 Rodelio Lingcong.

Vallejo was stabbed in the back and died while his brother Ernesto was bringing him to the hospital.

Prior to the attack, the unidentified suspect and his group were blocking motorists and pedestrians near the corner of Lakandula and Lualhati streets, investigation showed.

Pedicab driver Ramon Morada, 33, told police that one of the men punched him when he passed by. The group also hit a taxi with a wooden box, witnesses said.

Vallejo was stabbed for no apparent reason, police said.

Around 8:30 a.m. Saturday, stevedore Jojo Rosales, 25, was killed by his friend Alex Rodriguez, 35, under the Del Pan bridge along Muelle del Rio in Intramuros, said SPO3 Ernesto Jose.

Rodriguez allegedly killed Rosales for making a bad joke as they were seen teasing each other minutes earlier.

The suspect tried to escape toward San Nicolas, Binondo but was arrested by PO3 Bonifacio Ignacio of the Western Police District Station II.

Drunken cop shoots one, beats another

A DRUNKEN police officer allegedly shot a tricycle driver and pistol-whipped another in Caloocan City early yesterday morning.

Insp. Gerardo Berdin, 36, said to be a member of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Camarines Sur, attacked tricycle drivers Julius Talagtag, 21, and Ryan Gomez, 23, both residents of Barangay Bagumbong, Caloocan about 12:30 a.m., investigation showed.

Police could not tell which man was shot by the policeman, a resident of MCB II Subdivision in Bagumbong.

A drunken Berdin allegedly confronted the two men for no apparent reason in Bagumbong, said PO3 Romeo Mata.

After an argument, the policeman allegedly hit one of the two men with a gun and shot the other, grazing him in the head, Mata said.

The suspect denied the allegations and claimed he was prompted to fire a warning shot and fight back when the two men attempted to attack him, police said.

Police are set to file criminal charges against Berdin before the city prosecutor's office.

Christian V. Esguerra

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Laguna de Bay now watched by international community

(From page A23)

hectare Laguna de Bay had maintained its "Class C" status, which makes its water suitable for fish culture and industrial use.

Living Lakes

With Laguna lake's admission last week to the Living Lakes network, "protection of the lake has been elevated to an international status," said Chito Macapagal, general manager for corporate development of Unilever Philippines.

The Dutch-British consumer goods giant sponsored Laguna Lake's membership bid to the prestigious international body.

Laguna de Bay is "now a lake on the watch not just by Laguna Lake stakeholders but by the citizens of the world," Macapagal told the Inquirer.

Other Living Lakes members "will now have a say in saving and preserving the one of the most economically important and environmentally significant natural resources in the country," Macapagal added.

In Asia, five inland bodies of water have been admitted so far to the Living Lakes network—Lake Biwa in Japan; Mahakam lakes in Indonesia; Lake Tengiz in Kazakhstan; Lake Baikal in the Russian Far East; and Laguna de Bay in the Philippines.

The Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands Inc. (SCPW), the non-government organization partner of Living Lakes in the Philippines, believes "the acceptance of Laguna de Bay as a network partner underscores the significance of this important wetland to the overall well-being of the lakeside communities and its watershed."

Inspiring

Amy Lecciones, SCPW president, said "this international recognition inspires and adds the needed impetus for Clear, the tripartite partnership (composed of SCPW, LLDA and Unilever Philippines) to proceed with its program of action."

One of Clear's projects is the "documentation of the existing biodiversity profile of the lake, including the identification of its flora and fauna."

The tripartite body, in a report to the Living Lakes conference, aims to "fully characterize Laguna de Bay in terms of its biodiversity status and ecological richness, and increase the awareness of stakeholders on the importance of conserving Laguna de Bay," among other goals.

Earlier in Manila, Secretary Heherson Alvarez of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources called the partnership a "laudable effort as it strives to bring international recognition to our very own Laguna de Bay."

The tripartite group "shows us that it is indeed possible to have successful endeavors between the government and the private sectors," Alvarez said.

Cooperation

"We hope to draw in more participants to the project, expand project activities and establish a working relationship with other Living Lakes partners," Lecciones said.

Such working partnerships "will open the door to reflective and challenging dialog between Living Lakes partners," said Stefan Hormann, Living Lakes project manager.

Jorg Durr-Pucher, one of the founders of the Global Nature Fund, the Germany-based group which established and coordinates Living Lakes, stressed the need to "improve the exchange of experiences and know-how between Living Lakes partners and share experiences with other stakeholders."

After building up a network of 18 lakes all over the world, Durr-Pucher, also managing director of the German Environmental Aid Association, said "cooperation is the secret behind the success of the network's initial activities."

"They say two hands are better than one," Durr-Pucher said. "In this case, 18 hands are better than one."

Vulnerable

According to both Borja and Macapagal, Laguna de Bay "now has at its fingertips the experiences of other Living Lakes partners on lake management, technical or otherwise."

During the 5th Living Lakes conference in Lake Biwa, Japan, the network reported "all lake regions are vulnerable to environmental pollution."

"Lake areas are not only man-made landscapes, recreation areas for tourists and drinking water reservoirs," the body noted. "They are also gathering places for migratory birds and habitat for millions of plants animals."

The most important threats to lakes, the network said, include toxic and nutrient pollution, siltation, regulation of water levels, and commercial fishery.

> Laguna de Bay 'now has at its fingertips the experiences of other Living Lakes partners on lake management, technical or otherwise.'

"Yet, up to now, the protection of lakes is almost exclusively left to regional or national initiatives," it said. "The overall intent of the international lake network is to prepare the ground for an ongoing and sustainable international dialog. Important tools include the exchange of know-how and technologies and experiences between environmental NGOs of lake regions moving Agenda 21 from paper to practice."

Support system

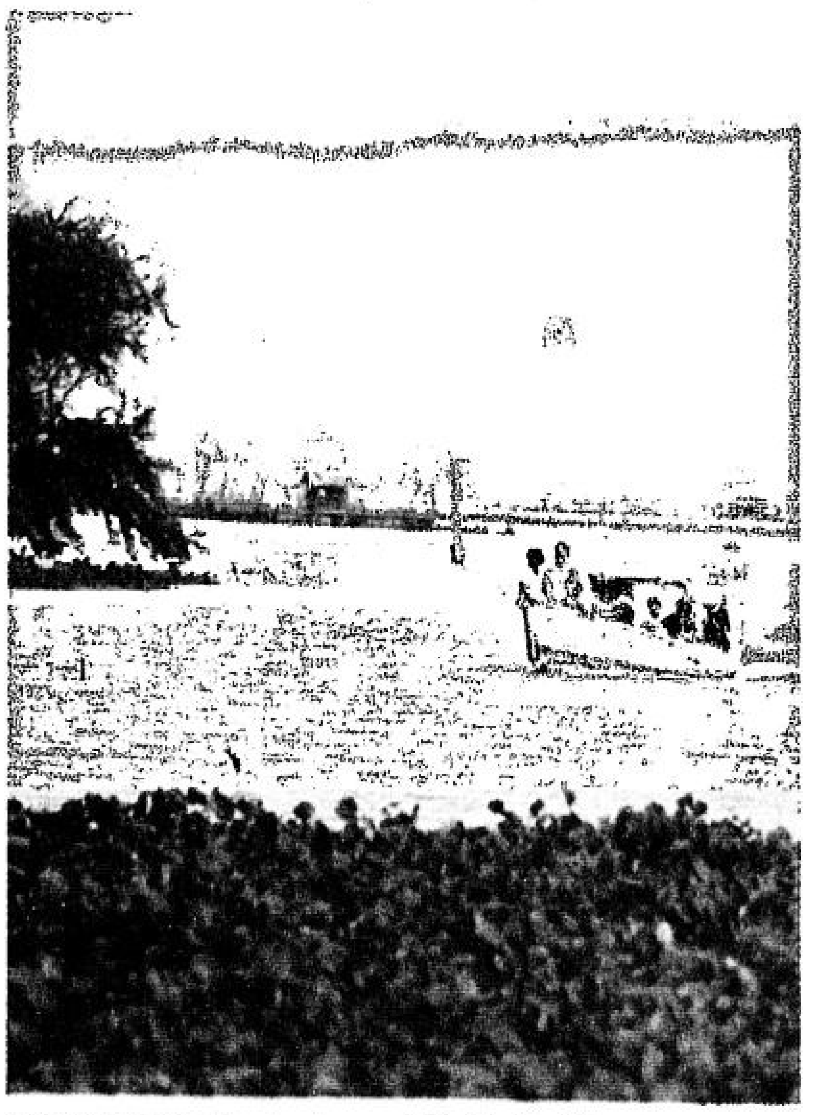
I. Nyoman Ngurah Suryadiputra, technical director of Wetlands International Asia-Pacific/Indonesia Programme (WIAPIP), a Bogor, Indonesia-based NGO, described the partnership between Living Lakes partners a "support system."

"Each one can learn from each other's experiences and problems and how those problems were addressed," Suryadiputra said.

A case in point is the Mahakam Lakes (Danau Jempang, Danau Melintang and Danau Semayang) in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, which the NGO represents.

"Due to changing water levels the size of the lakes' surface ranges from zero to more than 60,000 hectares," the network reported. "Annual fluctuations can reach more than six meters. (But) the main environmental problems facing the lakes are species extinction and habitat loss due to land conversion, pollution by pesticides and changes in hydrology due to dredging and dam-building activities."

Like Laguna de Bay, Laguna Fuquene in Colombia is threatened by sedimentation, with 6,700 tons of sediments deposited every year in the lake's lagoon.



ALIVE. Laguna Lake has been admitted to the Living Lakes network of the world. DENNIS SABANGAN

Again like Laguna de Bay, Uluabat in Turkey is a shallow freshwater lake. It has also rich biodiversity. But its ecosystem is severely threatened by factors like industrial and domestic waste discharges and overfishing.

Everyone's concern

According to Borja, they looked forward to "exchanging views and sharing experiences with representatives of other Living Lakes partner lakes."

Durr-Pucher emphasized that "one Living Lakes partner's concern is also the concern of other partners."

In a report, Living Lakes said the "partnership will create and support a network within which local lake organizations can find a critical kinds of assistance for promoting sustainable development in lake areas."

"The overall aim of this support is the conservation and restoration of lakes by moving Agenda 21 from paper to practice," the report also said. "Partner lakes will provide outstanding examples of achieving sustainable development in lake areas."

According to a network publication, a core element of the Living Lakes partnership will be the active use of the Internet. "Besides using the Internet for network communications, Living Lakes will create linkages on the Web that will enable people around the world to get information for conserving lakes in their own areas," including Laguna de Bay in the Philippines.

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Hunger strike leaders isolated

By Alcuin Papa

DETENTION CENTRE CAMP BAGONG DIWA
B.I.D. KIDNAP FOR RANSOM SYNDICATE

DETAINEES at the Bureau of Immigration jail in Taguig, in this photo taken by fellow detainee Raymond Jackson, are protesting against alleged lack of attention and corruption among officials.

THREE of the leaders of the hunger strike at the Bureau of Immigration jail in Bicutan, Taguig are now allegedly in solitary confinement in an apparent attempt by immigration officials to silence them and stop their protest action.

Canadian Raymond Jackson said he and Iranian Reza Soltanee and Emmanuel Odense were now being held in the detention center of the BI's Intelligence Unit at the bureau's main office in Intramuros after they were transferred from the BI detention center in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

He said they were only offered food on the second day of their detention and they have been denied visits from family and their lawyers.

Jackson told the INQUIRER that they were brought there last week after he and the other detainees appeared on news broadcasts.

"It seems that the BI is having a hangover from Martial Law," Jackson said. "Our hunger strike was very peaceful yet the BI had reared its fascistic head in an effort to muzzle the truth about what's going on inside the center."

The detainees, numbering about 104 foreigners, had been protesting the poor living conditions in the jail and the lack of medical attention given to them.

They started their hunger strike after Indian detainee Satnam Singh died from heart complications. The detainees said Singh died because he was not brought to the hospital on time. They also accused the medical doctor attending to them of incompetence.

The doctor had since denied the charge, and said that she even recommended the transfer of Singh to a hospital.

At the height of their protest, immigration officials took away eight of the supposed leaders to quell the strike. Jackson said he did not know where the other five were being held.

But Supt. Lino Calingasan, officer in charge of the BI's Intelligence Unit, denied that Jackson and the two others were being held in solitary confinement.

"They are not being held in solitary cells," Calingasan said. "They are inside a cell with other detainees who are set to be transferred to Bicutan."

He also denied that the detainees were not being fed and were not allowed visitors.

Calingasan explained that the three refused to eat, apparently to continue with their hunger strike. He said the detainees later ate anyway.

"These are the most undisciplined among the detainees," he said. "But here they are given privileges."

Calingasan claimed that the leaders of the hunger strike had been forcing the other detainees to join them. If they refused, the other detainees were hurt, Calingasan claimed.

"We received complaints from the other detainees," he claimed. "That is why we took the leaders away."

He said the five other detainees were brought to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology holding center, also located inside Camp Bagong Diwa.

Indian businessman robbed, stabbed in Malabon

By Christian V. Esguerra

AN INDIAN businessman is in critical condition after a former police informer and an unidentified man stabbed and robbed him in Malabon City on Saturday afternoon.

Tarlok Bansel, 36, a resident of Acacia, Malabon, was stabbed while collecting payments from residents on nearby Estrella Street in Barangay Taniong around 4 p.m., said case investigators PO2 Jorge de la Cruz and PO2 Redentor Mantala Jr.

One of the suspects was identified only as Jimmy, said to be an ex-police asset and resident of Leonio Street, Taniong.

The suspects stabbed the businessman when he refused to surrender his money, witnesses told investigators.

Bansel was wounded in the right side of the body and in the right forearm, police said. The suspects escaped with his daily collection worth around P2,000.

Police said suspect Jimmy had previously been charged with robbery.

Militants hit ROTC promotion

By Agnes E. Donato

MILITANT student groups yesterday staged a picket at Camp Aguinaldo to condemn the promotion of the former commandant of the University of Santo Tomas' Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) who was earlier sacked for alleged anomalies which led to the murder of UST ROTC cadet Mark Welson Chua.

Rey Asis, one of the convenors of the group Abolish!, lashed at the Armed Forces of the Philippines and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for "coddling" instead of punishing Army Major Demy Tejares for his alleged negligence.

Abolish!, which had led massive student walkouts on campuses nationwide for the past weeks and which had launched a one-million signature drive for the abolition of the ROTC, vowed to heighten its campaign against the military training program.

"The AFP and Malacañang have only added insult to injury when, instead of punishing a human rights violator like Tejares, they even rewarded him," Asis said.

Romulo Yumul, Abolish! spokesperson and co-complainant of Chua in exposing the alleged extortion and bribery activities of the UST-ROTC officials, said he was enraged by Tejares' promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

"This only shows the concern of the military and President Macapagal is not the speedy resolution of Mark's case and the other cases of ROTC violence," Yumul said. "Why they are even allowing the perpetuation of violence being inflicted by the program.

"We shall continue to pursue justice for the victims of ROTC violence, as we heighten our campaign for the abolition of the ROTC."

Yumul maintained that only through the abolition of the ROTC could "ultimate justice" be given the victims of ROTC violence.

Cristina Palabay, president of the National Union of Students of the Philippines, echoed the sentiment.

"The greatest blunder and injustice for the victims and the rest of the cadets is continuing the ROTC because this would only cause the loss of more lives," Palabay said.

On Friday, Welson Chua, the father of the slain ROTC cadet, showed media people a copy of the Aug. 16 memorandum the President signed, addressed to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and approving the promotion of 134 regular and reserved officers of the Philippine Army, including Tejares.

Abolish! said it would stage a rally today in support of Rep. Lisa Masa of the party-list group Bayan Muna, who would file a bill seeking the abolition of ROTC.

2 men slain, 2 injured in Parañaque, Taguig

By Nelson F. Flores

TWO men were killed while two others were hurt in separate incidents in southern Metro Manila late Saturday night and early yesterday morning.

Police identified the slain men as Abner Alison, 34, of Signal Village, Taguig; and John Domingo, 26, a temporary resident of Parañaque City. Alison died from a broken skull while Domingo succumbed to several stab wounds.

Injured were Noel Noquera, 26, a resident of Vitales Compound, Parañaque City; and Arturo Nalimot, 27, of B.F. Subdivision, Barangay Almanza, Las Piñas City. Both were stabbed in the body.

PO2 Reynaldo Juan, Makati City police homicide investigator, said Alison died shortly after 11 p.m. while trying to escape a mob in Barangay Cembo. He said Alison jumped into the Pasig River to avoid a group of angry men chasing him but instead of hitting the murky river water he landed on a concrete slab head first, causing his instant death.

Juan said Alison was drunk and was apparently creating trouble in a neighborhood near the Guadalupe Bliss when a mob tried to gang up on him.

Thirty minutes later, Domingo and his friend Noquera were attacked with knives by two men in front of a restaurant along Taft Avenue Extension in Baclaran, Parañaque City.

PO3 Roque Tome, Parañaque City police homicide investigator, said the two men were on their way home after noisily drinking when two men attacked them.

Tome said Domingo suffered seven stab wounds and was pronounced dead on arrival at the Pasay City General Hospital while Noquera, who was also brought to PCGH, sustained a stab wound in the armpit.

In Las Piñas City, two unidentified men attacked Malimot and his companions while walking in Barangay Talon.

SPO3 George Gabriel, Las Piñas City police investigator, said Malimot and his friends were singing loudly as they walked inside the dimly lighted compound when attacked at 2:15 a.m. with a knife and a broken bottle of beer.

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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
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CINEMA-3	ANIMAL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KISS OF THE DRAGON
CINEMA-6	RADYO
CINEMA-7	RED DIARIES
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CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SHREK
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SHREK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PLANET OF THE APES
CINEMA-12	BROTHERHOOD
CINEMA-14	SCREAM
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CINEMA-2	CLOSED
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CINEMA-1	RESERVE
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CINEMA-1	WALANG MATIGAS NA PUTO SA GUTOM
CINEMA-2	BLOODY WISH
CINEMA-4	HAPDI SA TAG-INIT

How we won P55,000 in a TV game show

(From page A30)

like I'm sour-graping, I was the one giving the clues and Jobert had to guess what I was trying to describe. The first answer was *"Mga uri ng tinapay."* My clues were *"pan de sal,* whole wheat, white bread." Jobert immediately got my drift and said *"tinapay."*

They said the answer was incomplete. Jobert couldn't get their drift. It was a lost cause from there.

Adrenaline rush

We managed to answer three out of the six, so that was an additional P15,000, which we gave to our staff.

Take if from me, I know you're also guilty of criticizing game show contestants thinking you could have answered this or that question so easily had you been the one playing. It's not easy. The studio is noisy, it's hard to concentrate, and there's a time limit. In our championship "Pera-mid" round, it was just 90 seconds. It was really rattling.

But there was a definite adrenaline rush, probably from the fear of humiliation and also from the exhilaration of getting a right answer. The prize money was great, but it was more the primal thrill of competition.

If there's ever a "Who Wants to be a Millionaire Celebrity Edition," I'm definitely joining. I'm going to ask my mom to be my "Phone a Friend" lifeline. Can you imagine how much fun it will be, if and when she agrees.

Lesaca at Country Waffles

MULTI-AWARDED violinist John Lesaca will be featured in a one-night show on Aug. 31, Friday, at Country Waffles Restaurant in Greenhills. Showtime is 9 p.m.

Lesaca began his love affair with music at the age of 5, starting out with the ukelele and later on with a violin while simultaneously playing the guitar and trying out other musical instruments. In high school, he played the violin as concertmaster of the UP Children's Ensemble.

As a member of major Philippine symphony orchestras, Lesaca has reaped many awards and citations.

Today, he is an environmentalist, a television show host, a steadfast supporter of civic projects and an avid golfer.

He now also plays non-classical music on his violin to reach out to a wider range of audiences.

John Lesaca's show at Country Waffles Greenhills is free to all dining guests. Country Waffles Restaurant-Greenhills is located at No. 12 Annapolis St., Greenhills. For more information, call 722-411 or 722 4422.

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Hear the Difference. Feel the Excitement

The films they're directing

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

STEVEN Soderbergh, currently Hollywood's hottest director thanks to his twin triumphs ("Traffic" and "Erin Brockovich") last year, comes on strong again with "Ocean's Eleven," his remake of and update on the all-star comedy-actioner filmed in 1960 by **Lewis Milestone.**

The original film starred **Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Angie Dickinson, Richard Conte, Cesar Romero, Patrice Wymore, Joey Bishop, Akim Tamiroff, Henry Silva, Ilka Chase and Norman Fell.**

It was a fanciful crime comedy about an 11-man team headed by Danny Ocean (Sinatra) attempting to rob five Las Vegas casinos simultaneously. Aside from the hi-jinks of the actors in the cast who belonged to Sinatra's Rat Pack, the movie was enlivened by the clever twist in its ending.

Soderbergh's version is set in the present day and also has an all-star cast led by **George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, Andy Garcia, Carl Reiner, and Julia Roberts.**

The director wants to make it clear, however, that his actors aren't aping the characterizations of the members of the original movie's cast, and that Clooney has no intention of doing Sinatra.

But the new movie's plot is still about a group led by Danny Ocean (Clooney) that has been formed to rob a Las Vegas casino tycoon (Garcia) who is dating Ocean's ex-wife (Roberts).

The film's tone is decidedly light, in keeping with the mood set by the 1960 production. But Soderbergh promises a grittier look at the underworld scene in Las Vegas.

For his part, master director **Robert Altman** is set to release "Gosford Park," starring **Maggie Smith, Kirstin Scott Thomas, Michael Gambon** and **Emily Watson.** The period film is about an aristocratic family and its servants, and is described as "a tale of murder and manners."

The story is told from the servants' point of view, and Altman confesses to an interest in his characters' "social, psychological and sexual interactions."

The film is also distinguished by top-level performances, led by the portrayal of **Michael Gambon**, described by some film buffs as the best actor in England, bar none. Well, with the international release of "Gosford Park," Gambon's superlative talent can now be appreciated by viewers worldwide.

In "Bad Company," **Joel Schumacher** directs the unusual stellar combination of **Chris Rock** and **Anthony Hopkins**, who play a ticket scalper and a CIA agent, respectively. How do the two mismatched men get together? Rock's brother was Hopkin's associate on a job, but he died, so Rock is conscripted to complete what he was supposed to do.

Rod Lurie directs **Robert Redford, James Gandolfini** and **Delroy Lindo** in "The Last Castle." In the military prison drama, Redford is cast as an army general who finds himself behind bars, under the control of a cruel colonel (Gandolfini). To get back at his corrupt jailer, Redford forms his own "army."

Penny Marshall directs **Drew Barrymore** in "Riding in Cars With Boys," where Barrymore ages from 15 to 35. She gets pregnant, has an unhappy married life, and her misery has a harsh effect on her son (played in young adulthood by **Adam Garcia**).

Finally, **Ron Howard** directs **Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly** and **Ed Harris** in "A Beautiful Mind," about mathematical genius John Forbes Nash Jr., whose brilliant career was severely circumscribed when he suffered from schizophrenia.

Feedback

A reader called us up to complain about our divas' penchant for "scream-singing" songs to impress listeners with their prodigious vocal range and power.

He pleaded for greater variety and contrast in vocal performances, and cited **Lea Salonga** for being so confident about her talent that she didn't feel like she had to use her singing voice as a battering ram to force her audience into admiring submission.

He wished that our other "divas" could be as considerate to their listeners' eardrums. But, are they secure enough to do that?

'A.I.'

The future according to Spielberg and Kubrick

BY RUBEN M. CRUZ JR.

REVIEW

VIRGIL once said that love conquers all. But could love be enough to make a robot child human? If we could program robots to love, would we be able to truly love them back? Would we care for them as we care for the significant humans in our lives? Could we ever get past their synthetic skin and circuits and look at them as real people?

"A.I.: Artificial Intelligence" succeeds not only in asking us these questions but in making us look at them as realities we might someday face, in a future that is distant but also most likely imminent.

Whatever the film's faults are—and personally I find quite a few—its one true, shining strength is its ability to share with us a vision that makes us think about the big issues in life.

Much has been written about how the late great filmmaker Stanley Kubrick nurtured "A.I." for more than two decades and how he collaborated with another great filmmaker by the name of Steven Spielberg to map out this dream film.

In 1983 Kubrick purchased the rights to a short story, "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long" from science fiction author Brian Aldiss with the intention of developing it into "A.I." Kubrick often consulted with Spielberg about the film's development until one day, in the middle of their conversation, Kubrick told him, "You know, you really ought to direct 'A.I.' and I should produce it for you. I think this movie is closer to your sensibility than mine."

But it was only after Kubrick's death in 1999 that Spielberg accepted the charge to direct "A.I." and write its screenplay.

Though cut short by Kubrick's death, the unlikely collaboration of the two masters still shows in the final product.

Populist and realistic

"A.I." harbors Spielberg's populist bent with Kubrick's cold, realistic cynicism. It unspools very much like a Spielberg fairy tale, replete with his patented sentimentality and the power presentations only his technical and production crews can muster. But it's a fairy tale that is told with Kubrick's sensibilities and treatment.

At times, the merging of the two filmmakers' influences begets an irritating identity crisis. At others, it results in an artistic fusion that leaves an indelible imprint on our consciousness.

The film opens with its own spooky "once-upon-a-time" version of the future. The polar ice caps have melted and submerged coastal cities around the world. Resources are scarce so human reproduction is strictly regulated. Humans have developed intelligent and very human-looking androids to work for them because robots do not consume precious resources.

The robots can do a wide range of tasks—including the most efficient prostitution imaginable—but as capable as they are, they are still devoid of human emotions.

Alternate son

Enter Professor Hobby (William Hurt), the brilliant scientist cum industrialist behind Cybertonics Manufacturing. Hobby tries to hurdle this last frontier by creating a robot child capable of loving and appreciating love. His prototype, David (Hale Joel Osment), is primarily intended for the yet unserviced market of childless couples who are unable to get a license from the government to reproduce.

Taking a first crack at the product are Monica and Henry Swinton (Frances O'Connor and Sam Robards) whose own son, Martin (Jake Thomas), has been cryogenically frozen until a cure for his terminal illness could be found.

At first the mother is unnerved by her alternate son but she gradually warms up to him. Their bonding, however, is interrupted when her flesh and blood son recovers, and complications soon arise which leads to David striking it out on his own and discovering for himself what this so-called humanity is all about.

Orga, mecha

The film's narrative is essentially divided into three stages and this first segment in the Swinton household, I believe, corresponds to Kubrick and Spielberg's shared vision based on the original Aldiss story about the robot child who struggles to make a connection with his human mother.

The promise of a solid, engaging science-fiction-love story is fulfilled in this opening reel, making me anticipate the ensuing possibilities in David's plight.

The latter half of the narrative takes a dark turn, in homage to Kubrick, probably the darkest material Spielberg has ever written. David ventures into the cruel world and experiences the inhumanity of supposedly real people—which the film labels "orga" for organic, as opposed to "mechas" for mechanic.

He essentially takes after Pinocchio's quest to become human, seeking the blessing of Pinocchio's Blue Fairy, with the help of his own Jiminy Cricket (a robot teddy bear voiced by Jack Angel) and his friend Gigolo Joe (Jude Law), a "love mecha" or a robot designed to be the ultimate lover boy.

The film's resolution is all Spielberg's, as Kubrick in his films never felt the need to neatly bundle things up in the end. Not that this one does, although Spielberg's effort to do so descends into a very false and corny conclusion.

The film had a nice opportunity for an ending 15 or 20 minutes before the actual one. But I won't spoil it for you by telling you how it's played. Suffice it to say that scene would have probably been a Kubrick ending.

Gifted Osment

"A.I." boasts of strong performances that rival the film's technical wonders. Osment is one of the most gifted actors of all time. He doesn't have one bad scene in the film, but there is one standout scene that truly shows his skillful blending of human and mechanical expressions.

In that scene, Monica Swinton reads a seven-word imprinting program that will, on the seventh word, activate a permanent bond between the robot and his surrogate mother. Watch Osment's face carefully and you'll see for yourself what I'm talking about.

Frances O'Connor is a revelation and Jude Law's suave performance as Gigolo Joe is compelling. Law reportedly studied mime and peacock movements and took extensive dance lessons in the tradition of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly to prepare for Joe's character.

William Hurt is also very strong in his brief scenes as David's Gepetto.

Spielberg's power team of film experts creates the perfect stage for these actors—a fantasy, futuristic world onscreen that in itself is worth the price of the movie ticket.

It is a world we can both marvel at and dread, and their teamwork truly raises the bar of the science fiction genre. More importantly, they create a fitting sendoff to Kubrick whose artistic vision Spielberg kept at the forefront of the film.

Nude painting, poetry plus Freestyle at Padi's Mindave

THE POPULAR Freestyle band members will cut the ribbon to launch the "Mindave Nude Paintings Exhibit" by the Ikalawang Palapag Group of young award-winning artists today at 8 p.m.

The launch will be held at the Mindave Gallery of Padi's Mindave restaurant bar on Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City.

Raul Delfin III, Jasper de Leon, Norman Dreo, Eric Quay Evano, Juan Sajid Imao, Dayong Mendoza, John Olivares, Omar Sebastian and Kris Soguillon, all graduates of UP Diliman College of Fine Arts, are members of the Ikalawang Palapag Group.

Padi's Mindave owner and writer Wilson Y. Lee Flores invited them to hold nude sketching sessions every Wednesday afternoons on the second floor of the restaurant bar.

Also tonight, Freestyle holds a repeat of its Mindave special concert before embarking on its first ever six-week US concert tour.

The country's biggest writers organization, the Unyon ng Mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas, will also hold poetry reading in the open-air garden of the three-story Padi's Mindave. Poets in English and Pilipino are welcome to participate and will be given free Budweiser beer.

Padi's Mindave invites all young people below 30 years old to join its essay writing contest on the theme "Vision of the Philippines in Year 2050," in English, not exceeding 2,000 words and with a Nov. 5, 2001 deadline.

The competition hopes to encourage the youth to ponder the Philippine future, the reforms necessary to transform the country into a progressive society, and their dreams for the country's future.

For inquiries, please call 453-0080 or 414-4930 to 34 or 925-3117.

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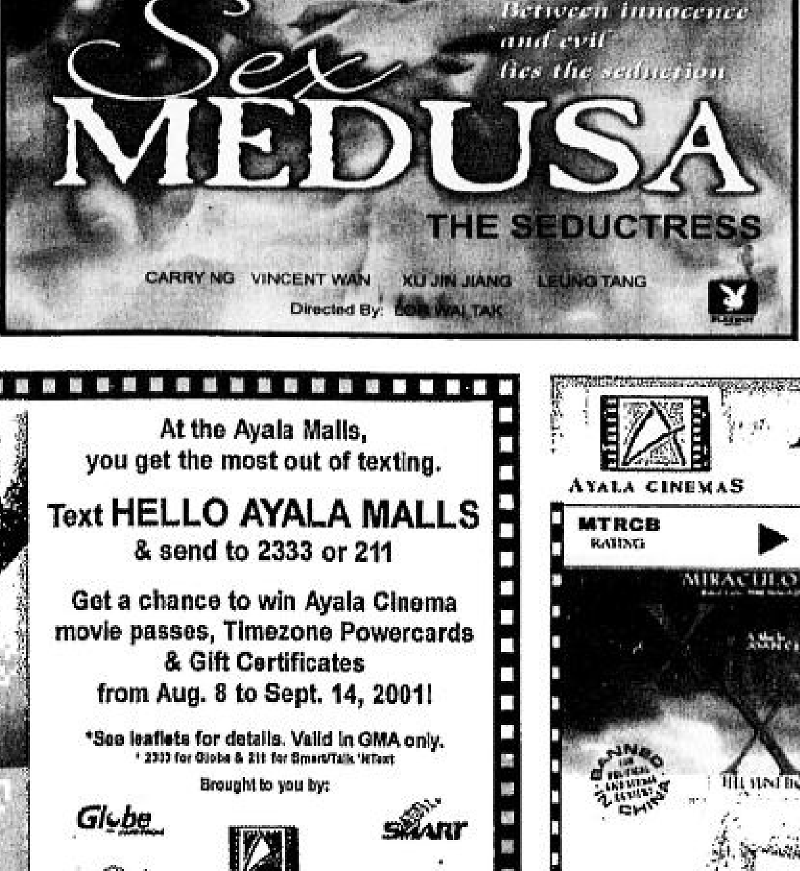

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

How we won P55,000 in a TV game show

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

WE Pinoys are now obsessed with game shows.

"Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" is now a consistent top-rater, and the noontime variety shows "Eat... Bulaga!" and "MTB" vie for the audience's allegiance by offering fun ways of giving away hundreds of thousands of pesos.

Last Thursday, "The Buzz" (Boy Abunda, Ricky Lo, Jobert Sucaldito and me) went up against "Talk TV" (Julius Babao, Tintin Bersola, Janet McBride and Ryan Agoncillo) in MTB's "Sagot ng Bayan."

For those of us who grew up addicted to "Family Feud" hosted by Richard Dawson and "$25,000 Pyramid" hosted by Dick Clark, this new game portion is clearly a hybrid of both games.

In the first part, there are three survey questions which were each answered by 100 respondents. You have to buzz in first and hopefully get the most popular answer so that your team has the first chance to answer.

Dazed

The first question was, "What gift would Pinoys most want to receive on their birthday?"

Boy answered a birthday cake. I think he was a bit dazed, so that's what he came up with. None of the 100 respondents agreed with him.

Julius said jewelry and they got to answer.

We had the opportunity to steal. Unfortunately, I said a television set or appliances. No one surveyed agreed with me.

Jobert had wanted us to answer house and lot. Would you believe, he was right!

Question No. 2, with Tintin against me: "100 teenagers surveyed. What kind of job would they wish to have after graduation?"

I buzzed first. I said, computer programmer or anything to do with information technology. Wrong; wasn't up there.

Tintin had her chance. She said newscaster. Wrong again. Were we out of touch? No. 1 answer was engineer.

Patrimonio

To spare you the details, "Talk TV" again won that round. Our executive producer Roxy, who was up front cheering us on, was already turning pale. Really super embarrassing if we were shut out.

Last question. The points were now doubled. Do or die. Ricky Lo against Janet McBride.

The question was, "Who is the favorite basketball player..." Janet buzzed in, she said "Michael Jordan."

Roderick Paulate, the game master, wasn't finished with the question yet. He continued on with the very important phrase "in the Philippines?"

Was Michael Jordan up there? Nu-uh.

Ricky Lo looked at me and with a mischievous smile said, "Alvin Patrimonio." *Kuya* Dick asked, "*Nandyan nga ba si* Alvin Patrimonio?" No. 1 answer.

There were only two answers left. Jobert answered Benjie Paras. Nope, he wasn't on the list.

Jaworski, Ildefonso

Boy admitted knowing next to nothing about basketball. He asked if the player had to be active. Amy Perez said no. Boy said "Jaworski." Yes, he was No. 3.

One name left, and it was my turn. My mom is a big PBA fan, and we've been watching and discussing the championship series. Although she was for Red Bull, she and I agreed that Danny Ildefonso of San Miguel was truly the most consistent player in the league. We had both said that thank goodness—no offense meant to the Fil-Ams—but it felt good that a local, home-grown talent was playing so well and serving as an inspiration for all the Pinoy kids out there. His name stuck in my mind, and I'd just read that he was headed for back-to-back MVP crowns.

Confidently, I said Danny Ildefonso. Thank God I was right.

By virtue of the double-the-points value of that third question, we made it to the championship round! Our Buzz staff was euphoric! The hosts did not lose credibility after all.

My gosh, I didn't realize so much was at stake. We had already won P40,000.

In the championship round, there was a P100,000 bonus if you could answer all six questions forming the "Pera-mid."

I'm not going into the nitty-gritty because I don't want to sound

HOW/ A28

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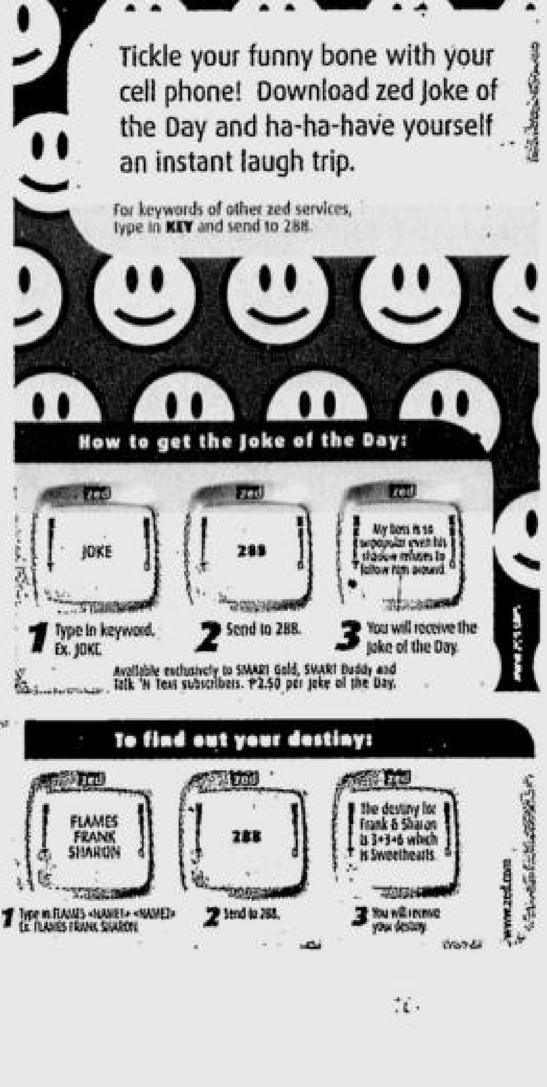
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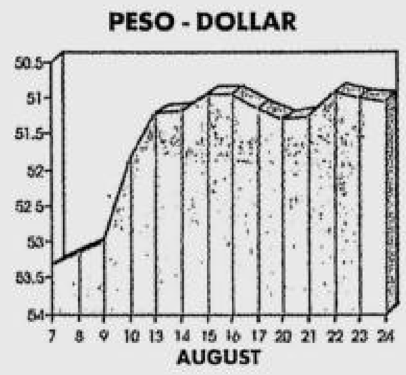

GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

Peso-Dollar Rate

P 51.05 = $1
As of 5 p.m., August 24, 2001

¥ 119.88 = $1
As of 5 p.m., August 24, 2001

GOLD:$275/275.50
per ounce Hong Kong, August 24, 2001

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE AYALA, Gokongwei and PentaCapital Investment Corp. groups are bidding for the 55-percent stake held by Bonifacio Land Corp. in an 18.9-hectare prime property project inside the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

INQUIRER sources said the three groups have submitted their official intention to BLC, a unit of listed property firm Metro Pacific Corp. which is divesting its development rights in the Global City's northern central business district project this September.

The sources said the Ayala group would participate through publicly listed property unit Ayala Land Inc. while the Gokongwei group will use Robinsons Land Corp. Both are engaged in residential and commercial development.

The third bidder is investment house PentaCapital, which is associated with Alfredo Ramos of National Bookstore and banker Jovencio Cinco. The company is into investment banking and financial services, specializing in businesses related to real estate, leisure, tourism and infrastructure.

BLC is scheduled to announce the shortlist of pre-qualified bidders today and the sources said all the three groups would likely make it.

ALI, a consistent stock market favorite among local property firms, earlier won the bidding for another piece of land sold by the state-controlled Bases Conversion Development Authority within the former Fort Bonifacio military camp in Taguig. The property will be the site of its regional shopping center project.

Other sources said the Gokongwei group was open to bringing in foreign partners for the project, one possibility of which was Singaporean conglomerate United Industrial Corp. Ltd. where the group owns a 24.3-percent stake.

UIC owns majority of Singapore Land Ltd., the oldest property firm in Singapore, and likewise has interests in consumer products, shipping, information technology, travel and printing and packaging.

Even without a foreign partner, however, RLC's parent company JG Summit enjoys a cash hoard of P19 billion, almost half of its current assets of P40 billion.

PentaCapital was the company tapped by Cojuangco during his previous bid for control of Mimosa leisure estate, the flagship project of debt-ridden Mondragon International Philippines Inc.

PentaCapital is currently helping property developer Megaworld Corp. with the multibillion-peso Sheraton Marina Hotel project in Manila, which it is developing jointly with subsidiary Fairmont Holdings Inc. (formerly BW Resources Corp.)

BLC is selling its stake in the project in order to free up more resources for the development of the rest of the Global City. Under the strategy, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., the joint venture between BLC and the BCDA, will inject the 18.9-hectare property into a new company in exchange for shares. BLC is thus selling its 55-percent stake in the new company to a new investor. This developed as BLC's parent firm Metro Pacific faces the big challenge of reducing its P10.5 billion worth of outstanding debts. A portion of the proceeds from the sale will be used to retire some debts.

A lot of Metro Pacific's debts are maturing within the next 12 months, putting the company under tremendous pressure to restructure some debts and liquidate other assets.

Metro Pacific's parent company, First Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong, has agreed last April to provide short-term financing to redeem up to $88 million in convertible notes.

After the settlement of these convertible bonds, Metro Pacific still needs to pay about P5 billion, of which about P2 billion consists of long-term debt.

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DoF, MRTC start talks on MRT-3 deal

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has started talks with Metro Rail Transit Corp. for the possible conversion of the 25-year build-lease-and-transfer MRT-3 contract into a build-and-transfer deal.

This will pave the way for the immediate transfer of the ownership of MRTC assets to the government.

"I would like to restructure the contract and make it advantageous to the government. From the current BLT arrangement, we can turn it to a BT so the government will own the assets," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said.

Camacho did not say how the negotiations would affect the plan of the MRTC consortium to undertake the 5-kilometer expansion of the Metro Rail Transit 3 from North Edsa to Monumento.

He also did not say how the government would pay MRTC should the conversion plan pushed through. In a similar buy-out plan of the previous administration, however, the DoF had considered paying MRTC with government securities with medium- to long-term maturity.

The MRTC consortium is composed of Fil-Estate Management, Ayala Land Inc., Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp., Greenfield Development Corp., Ramcar Inc., Allante Realty and Development Inc. and DBH Inc.

Under the 25-year BLT contract sealed during the term of then President Ramos, the government guaranteed the consortium a 15-percent return on its equity of $190 million.

The government also guaranteed MRTC's loans worth $465 million to the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, the Japan Export-Import Bank, the Postal Bank of the Czech Republic and the Czech Export Credit Agency, plus a group of local banks.

With passenger volume hitting only about 250,000 daily instead of the projected 440,000 daily, the government was left paying the group some $800,000 or about P42.5 million monthly in rental and $80 million or some P4 billion yearly to MRTC's creditors.

GSIS asked to oversee auction for $10-B Napocor insurance

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. on Friday asked the Government Service and Insurance System for two representatives to a committee it created to oversee the public auction of its $10-billion insurance policy.

In a statement, Napocor said it decided to take an active role in the choice of brokers and reinsurers for its industrial all-risk policy due to the amount involved and "to ensure greater transparency and accountability."

The policy, which expires on Sept. 30, covers Napocor's fixed assets, including power plants, substations and nationwide transmission network.

The bidding for reinsurance is scheduled early in September.

Napocor clarified that it would still be GSIS that would write the policy, which "would be backed up by several insurance companies, which have proposals."

Under Republic Act 656, or the Property Insurance Law, the GSIS has the mandate to write insurance policies covering properties of government agencies and government-owned and -controlled corporations.

In earlier statements, Napocor said interested insurance firms included Benfield Greig, Arthur J. Gallagher, Aon Corp., the group of Jardine Lloyd Thompson, Marsh McLennan and Willis Group Ltd.

Jardine Davis and Marsh hold a significant majority in Napocor's existing policy.

Also, a Napocor document obtained by the INQUIRER showed that the power firm had collected only $1.6 million in the last five years as against $47 million in premiums paid.

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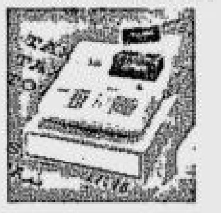

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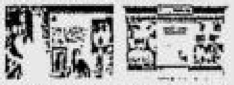

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GOINGS-ON

Banco de Oro's new branch

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank recently opened a branch at Biñan, Laguna, and another at the SM Supercenter in Parañaque City, bringing its network to 114 branches nationwide.

Banco de Oro Biñan branch is located on A. Bonifacio Street, Bo. Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna, and operates from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, Banco de Oro SM Supercenter branch is located at the ground floor of the SM Supercenter on Dr. A. Santos Avenue, Sucat, Parañaque, and is open from Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Banco de Oro offers a full range of products and services ranging from savings, loans, investments, Internet banking and cash management solutions.

Pepsi taps SourcePilipinas

PEPSI-COLA Products Philippines Inc. has just concluded the purchase of their filtration requirements through SourcePilipinas.com. Five leading suppliers submitted 41 bids. The winning bid was 21-percent lower than the company's previous purchase price early this year.

Pepsi hosted an auction for a three-month's supply of filter tubes, plain filter pads and carbon filter pads.

"In line with our company's objective of enhancing our competitive position, it is imperative to find a system that will allow us to cut costs during these difficult times," Pepsi-Cola COO Jessie Domingo says.

SourcePilipinas is a multi-industry B2B horizontal e-marketplace powered by Oracle's latest exchange technologies.

Medserv's ER5000 card

AT LEAST 72 hospitals all over the country have already confirmed their intention to sign up with MedServ as part of the network of accredited hospitals for the ER5000 card. This was revealed by Virgilio del Valle, president of MedServ, the new company behind the innovative emergency card. In effect, these hospitals have agreed to honor and accept the ER5000 card.

The card will pay emergency room bills up to P5,000 including doctors' fees, charges for the use of equipment and consumed medicine and supplies and ancillary services.

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The congressman and the socialite

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

YOU would have thought that two consenting adults would conduct their tryst in their private hideaway, specially if the two have easy money to throw around to cover their tracks.

But, against basic decency and common sense, a congressman from the South and a New York-based socialite chose to conduct their occasional tryst right in the condominium of the socialite's ailing father.

Unfortunately for the lovers, the two were caught in bed no less than by the father when the latter went out of his room to inspect the strange noises coming from the adjoining room.

What followed next was a torrent of expletives not even, to quote a local idiom, a dog could eat. Even the startled security and household staff could offer no coherent explanation when confronted by the raging patriarch.

The congressman and the socialite, by the way, are still very much married but not to each other, she to a multimillionaire old enough to become her father.

What is the public-interest angle in this private mess?

The congressman and the socialite are partners in a multimillion-peso laundry scheme, stashing off the properties of the socialite's family to destinations far removed from the BIR's eyes. Or so they think.

How do we know of this scandalous discovery? The congressman and the socialite would know.

BMW blitzkrieg

AFTER drastically slashing down installment terms, the new meisters of the local BMW Group are set to continue their marketing offensive by introducing the full range of German road wonders to dreamy-eyed Filipinos one model a month.

The first salvo was fired on Friday with the 325Ci, a 2+2 convertible whose automatic, full-option version is being offered here at P3.8 million. (A similar but bare model we found in the BBC Top Gear website had a price tag of 28,110 sterling pounds or about P2.1 million.)

Next month, the best-selling X-5 sport utility vehicle will be formally launched, although you may have already seen a few units, inevitably black, scooting about town or to Tagaytay; among the first X-5 owners include PLDT chair Antonio Cojuangco III and BMW/Porsche dealer Robert Coyiuto Jr.

On the other hand, the new Rover Mini replacement, which has been drawing raves from the motoring press, will hopefully be made available next year, assuming the local BMW executives can wangle a few units from its Munich headquarters.

Stability for Starex

HYUNDAI Starex, the Korean van that became a local runaway favorite through the gray market, is finally coming to the Philippines through the legitimate dealership network.

According to the grapevine, Richard Lee of Universal Motors has won the right to assemble the van as well as import the parts from the Korean manufacturer.

For the new venture, Lee, who assembles and markets Nissan utility vehicles and Volvo saloons, tapped banker Edward Go to become chair and Nissan leasing executive Leon Herrera as president of the new Hyundai subsidiary.

Lee is currently choosing dealers and locations nationwide, which network he hopes to open in time for the Christmas spending season.

Madrigal mix-up

THE TROUBLE with being a *promdi* is that one is never sure of the provenance and the intertwined relations of Manila's high society.

Contrary to what was reported here Friday, Francisco "Paqui" Ortigas is neither a lawyer nor his mother a Madrigal. The heir to the Ortigas land fortune is actually married to a Madrigal.

According to the grapevine, Ortigas already owns a Bell but is quite unhappy with it that he is now seriously considering a Eurocopter, reportedly upon the recommendation of no less than the Madrigal matriarch herself, lawyer-banker Chito Madrigal-Collantes.

Heard through the grapevine

FORMER SEC Chair Perfecto Yasay Jr. has been appointed lawyer and spokesperson of the Naia airport services and ground handlers group that is fighting the "monopoly" terms of the new Naia Terminal 3.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Matsushita to spend ₱600M for RP expansion project

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

MATSUSHITA Business Machine Corp. of the Philippines, a subsidiary of Japanese electronics giant Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd., is investing nearly P600 million in its factory at Carmelray Industrial Park to manufacture parts for its multifunction fax machine.

Based on its application for incentives with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Matsushita would spend P588 million to manufacture a multifunction fax machine, which also serves as a copier, computer printer, and answering machine. The new compact digital is a high efficiency machine that can be hooked up to other computers. Peza granted the new project with fiscal perks such as income tax break and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

The firm has allotted 7,500 square meters in Carmelray for the new production line. The project will create more than 150 new direct and indirect jobs.

Matsushita has started construction of the factory this month and it plans to start commercial operations in November this year.

Last year, Matsushita, through Kyushu Matsushita Electric Corp. of the Philippines (PKME), put up a new P1-billion plant in Carmelray to manufacture readable and rewritable compact disc drives for export.

Matsushita currently produces various products such as color televisions, refrigerators, air conditioners, copiers, printers, closed-circuit video equipment and mobile phones both for domestic and overseas sales. Matsushita markets its products under the National and Panasonic brands.

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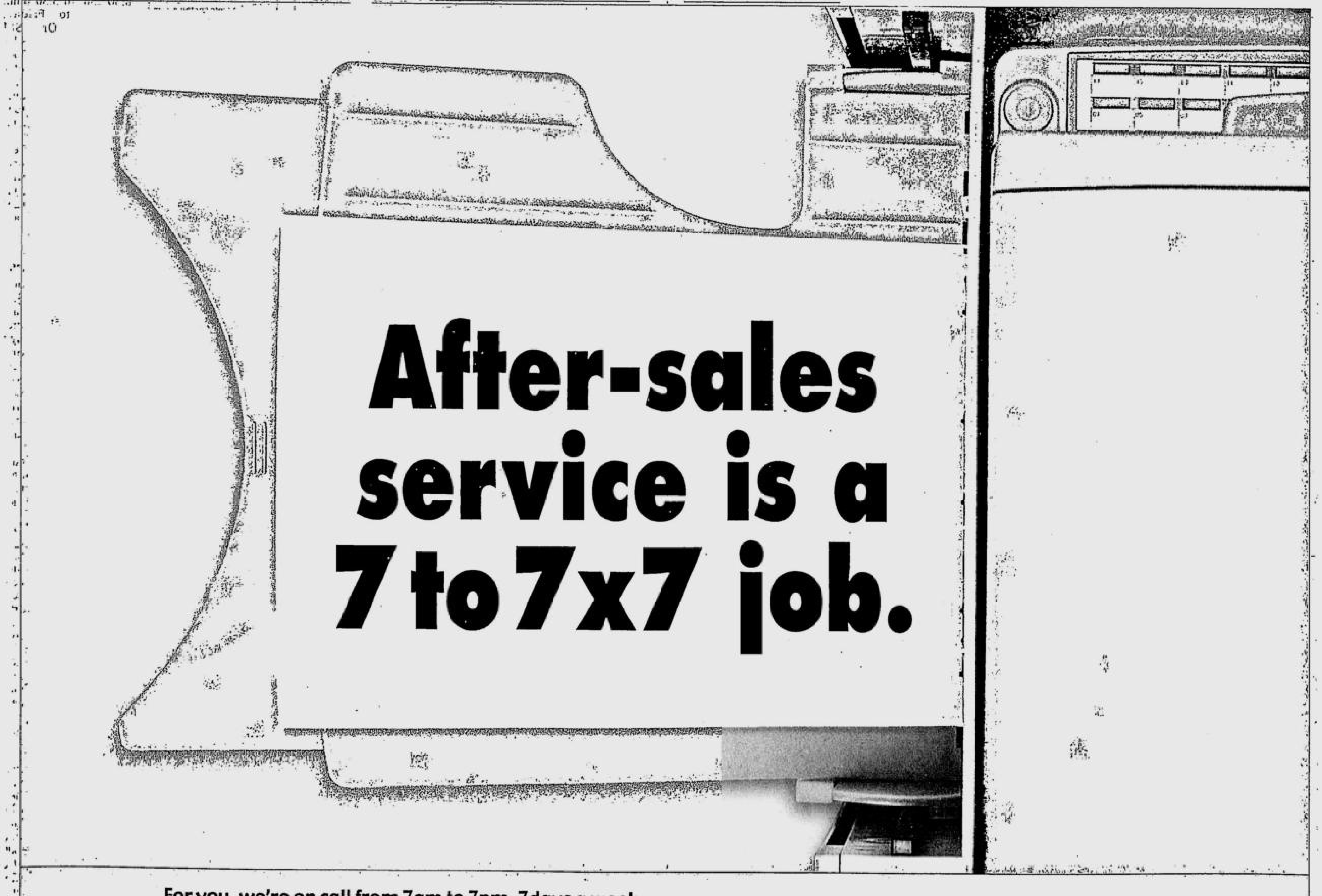

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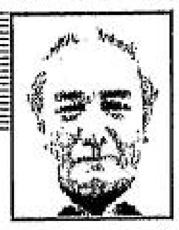
Insurance monopoly in the making–Part II

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES



Honesto C. General

THE INSURANCE monopoly being hatched by General Edgardo Abenina (ret.) of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) is the sweetest sweetheart deal in history.

Abenina's sweetie pie is a new firm called DTech Management Inc. Its incorporators are Emeil G. Dy Lim, Edmund R. Abesamis, Jose Bernardo S. Silverio and Erwin G. Dy Lim. Faced with the charge of conflict of interest, the fifth incorporator, Miguel G. Coyiuto of the well-known insurance family, has left the firm. Dennis Marcelo is chief operating officer, George Yang is consultant.

DTech was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission last May 16. By June 1, a memorandum of agreement was signed sending DTech on a mission to form a consortium of all the non-life insurance companies. The consortium was to open for business on Aug. 15.

Why the rush? Supposedly in 1999 alone, unscrupulous companies, agents and brokers issued almost 2.8 million fake Certificates of Cover (COCs), accounting for full 75 percent of the 3.7 million registered vehicles all over the country. (The COC is the document filed at the LTO when registering a vehicle, and is a digest of the compulsory third party liability insurance policy that, by law, every vehicle owner needs.) All this fakery meant an unreported premium income of about P1.7 billion and a tax loss of almost P400 million. Abenina wants to put a stop to this foolishness, and fast.

But the figures are a gross exaggeration. My analysis of the Insurance Commission's 1999 annual report shows unreported polices of only 12 percent of total registered vehicles. Since the total estimated premium volume was P2.3 billion, then the unreported premium was only P276 million and the tax loss about P63 million. Still a big problem, but not enough to justify a complete overhaul of the way COC business is done.

The proposed solution to the problem is computerization. This is where DTech comes in. It claims it has designed and can operate a nationwide computer program that makes it impossible to issue a fake COC. Maybe so. But DTech will be the sole issuer of COCs all over the country. In other words, the program will be applied, not on the 12-percent problem area alone, but on the entire COC portfolio, including the 88 percent where the problem of fake COCs does not exist. This is the monopoly.

But the real reason for rushing into operational status is that DTech and its backers cannot wait to lay their hands on the treasure trove. DTech will get the unheard of commission of 40 percent. On an annual premium volume of P2.3 billion, the 40 percent commission means a whopping P920 million a year. Overnight, DTech, with a P2-millior paid-up capital, will become one of the biggest insurance operations in the country. It will be bigger than the 98 nonlife companies in the country except the three largest, and bigger than the 40 life companies except the top five. And to what end? To collect the unreported premium of P276 million and the tax loss of P63 million. Big deal.

The agents and brokers, vehemently against the formation of the consortium from the start, say that if the companies are willing to pay 40 percent commission, this clearly means the premium is much too high and should be reduced by 40 percent. This will directly benefit the vehicle owners. The intermediaries also feel that the solution to the problem is to go after the lawbreakers.

Abenina now faces a stiffening opposition from the insurance companies; opening the consortium has been moved to Jan. 1. Insurance Commissioner Eduardo T. Malinis himself, originally open-minded, is now firmly against any consortium.

Is there a hidden agenda somewhere? The word going around the insurance industry, which is probably the most catty in the land, is that this consortium is a fund-raising project of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) and the Young Officers Union (YOU). Will their crazy dreams ever fade away?

Congress to investigate cement industry's 'Big 4'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE HOUSE of Representatives will again probe the cement industry on allegations that the 'Big 4' foreign cement players, which control over 90 percent of the industry, have been operating as a cartel to jack up prices despite excess capacity and depressed demand.

Rep. Harry Angping, chair of the House Committee on Trade and Industry, has asked industry players and consumer groups to attend his committee's hearing on Thursday (Aug. 30) at the Batasan complex.

The investigation was triggered by three resolutions filed the past few weeks by lawmakers—Rep. Oscar Rodriguez' resolution to investigate individuals and business entities who continue to manipulate the prices of cement; Rep. Eduardo K. Veloso's proposed inquiry into the possible existence of a cartel in the cement industry and the anomalous practices adversely affecting the price of cement; and a proposal to formulate a comprehensive measure to ensure that local manufacturing industries would be safeguarded from unabated import dumping activities.

Aside from the alleged collusion in the industry, Rep. Rodolfo Plaza wanted a deeper look into the mining and environmental aspects of cement production. Plaza said Congress should determine whether the foreign-owned cement companies were complying with the provisions of the country's mining rules, particularly on the payment of royalties to the government for their quarrying operations.

This will be the second time since 1999 that the House of Representatives will investigate the cement industry for alleged cartel operations. Previous inquiries yielded no concrete results.

The House inquiry comes on the heels of a similar move in the Senate to investigate the industry's alleged cartel-like operations based on the steep rise in cement prices.

Lawmakers noted that cement prices have more than doubled from P45 per 40-kilogram bag in 1998 to P97 in 1999. Cement prices have since jumped by more than 50 percent to P147 per bag so far this year.

Amid the flurry of investigations on the cement industry, which the lawmakers claimed were being done in aid of legislation, the Department of Trade and Industry is set to reveal within the week its decision on the petition of the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp. to impose a provisional duty on cement imports allegedly dumped from Taiwan.

On one hand, Philcemcor, which is dominated by Holderbank, Cemex, Lafarge Holdings, and Blue Circle, warned that the unabated entry of dumped imports would force them to close down their operations and render thousands of employees jobless.

Consumer groups, on the other hand, are worried that the imposition of a provisional duty on imports would further push up cement prices despite excess supply and weak demand.

Gov't expecting ₱80B in additional revenue

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT is targeting an P80-billion increase in revenue next year, about P21 billion of which is expected to come from new administrative measures and improved collection by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

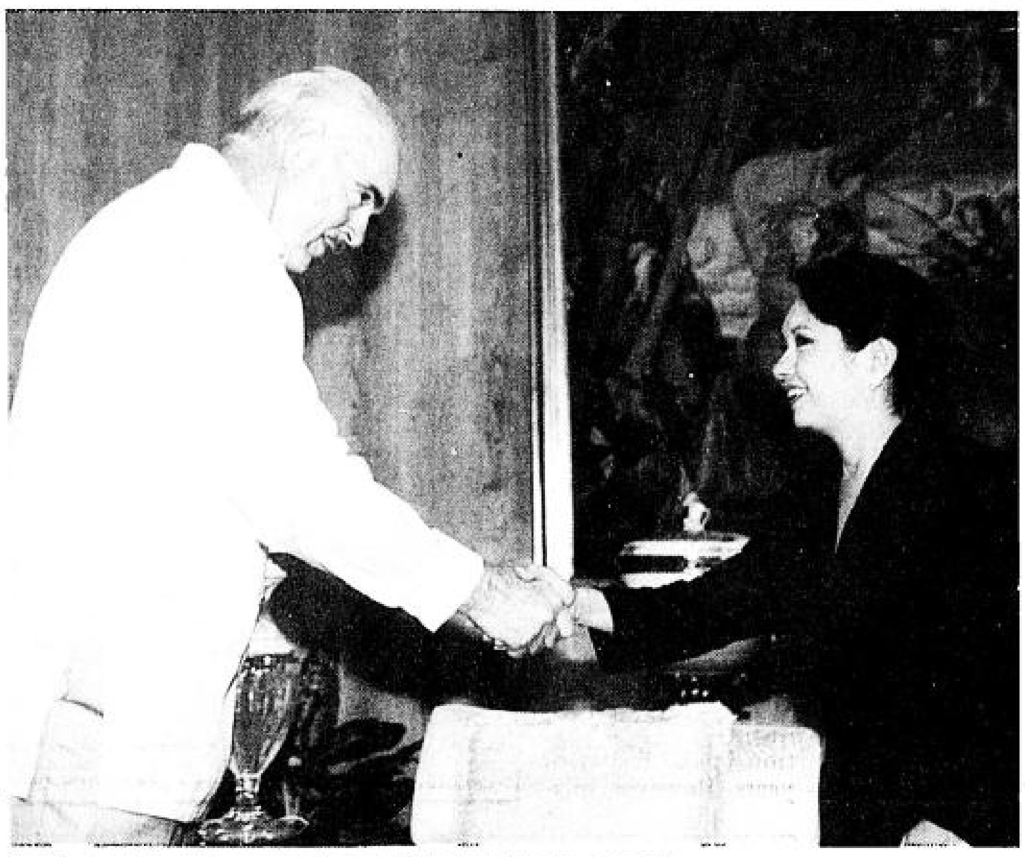
Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the government could raise some P13 billion from the implementation of new administrative measures and another P7.7 billion from the reforms that the BIR has been implementing.

Camacho said this would be on top of the P9.5 billion in half-year revenue that the government was hoping to generate from legislative measures to be pushed in Congress.

The administrative measures include the redefinition of the motor vehicle tax system that calls for the lifting of the exemption of Asian Utility Vehicles or AUVs from excise taxes and the rationalization of the gross income tax incentive to locators in economic zones administered by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

The redefinition of automotive taxes was seen to contribute about P9 billion yearly. Camacho said instead of a legislation, the government could implement the new policy through an administrative measure.

Another administrative measure is the imposition of a cap on representation expenses and a review of the fringe benefits tax. The latter was expected to contribute P2 billion to the state coffers last year but actually raised only P269 million.



$30-M INVESTMENT IN HIGH-TECH PROJECT

President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes to Malacañang Ronald Ragland, chair and chief executive officer of the California-based Remec, in a courtesy call on Aug. 21. Ragland said Remec has poured in a $30-million investment into the Philippines for the establishment of a high technology microwave industry.

Bankers' bourse to earn ₱100M/yr

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE PLANNED fixed-income exchange of the Bankers Association of the Philippines would likely generate revenue of about P100 million on the average over the next five years based on the most conservative scenario.

This was noted by the commercial banking group in its information package on the proposed exchange to be presented to potential investors.

The BAP also noted that, under a more aggressive case, the new exchange's revenue would grow from P103 million in the first year of operations to P2.2 billion in the second year before falling steadily to P1.2 billion, P993 million and P731 million in the succeeding years, respectively.

The BAP said the base case or lower projection assumed that only government securities would be listed on the exchange. Under the business plan, such securities issued by the government, through the Bureau of Treasury, would be listed free of charge."

The more optimistic scenario considered that the existing volume of commercial paper, estimated at P40 billion, would be listed on the exchange after the first year, but that progressively less CPs would be listed in the succeeding years.

The exchange will have a paid-up capital of P500 million. The BAP has already approved a P100-million investment in the exchange while the Investment Houses of the Philippines is supposed to infuse another P100 million.

Ecozone exports up 4.9%

EXPORTS from state- and private-owned industrial estates inched up by 4.9 percent in the first seven months of the year as shipments overseas slowed down significantly due to weak demand from the US and Japan.

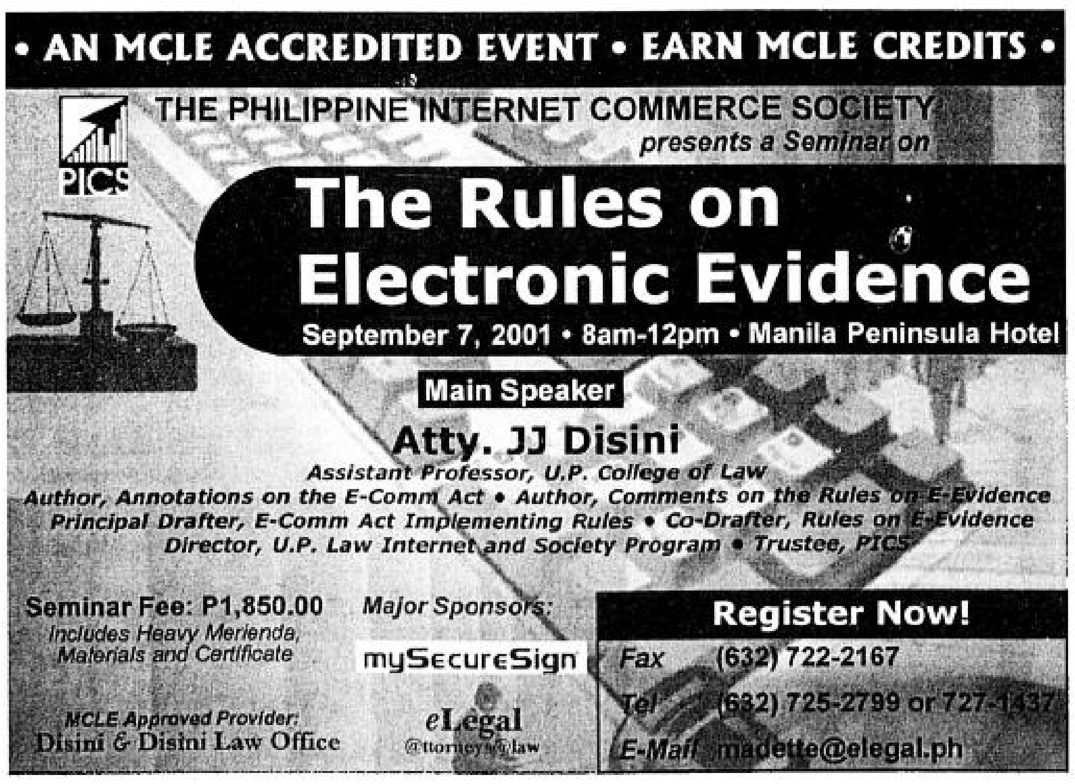
Based on a report by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, exports hit $11.278 billion from January to July this year from $10.745 billion during the same period last year.

Exports from private economic zones surged 17 percent to $7.853 billion in the first seven months this year from $6.691 billion a year ago. The top exporters were Laguna Technopark Inc. ($2.283 billion), Carmelray Industrial Park I and II ($1.314 billion), Light Industry and Science Park I and II ($953 million), Amkor Anam ($815 million) and Gateway Business Park ($750.735 million).

The export gains from private economic zones were nearly wiped out by the decline in the export receipts of state-run industrial estates, whose export shipments stumbled 15.5 percent to $3.424 billion in the first seven months this year from $4.053 billion during the same period last year.

Except for the Bataan Export Processing Zone (up 9.5 percent to $373.65 million), all government-owned economic zones suffered hefty drop in exports—Baguio City Export Processing Zone (down 29.4 percent to $1.193 billion), Cavite Export Processing Zone (down 6.3 percent to $1.031 billion) and Mactan Export Processing Zone (down 10.2 percent to $826 million).

With no improvement in the US and Japan economy expected this year, the Peza will have a tough time meeting its projected 15-percent increase in exports to $23.029 billion this year. Last year, Peza exports jumped 27 percent to $20.025 billion from $15.807 billion in 1999. Peza accounted for more than half of $39 billion in total exports last year.



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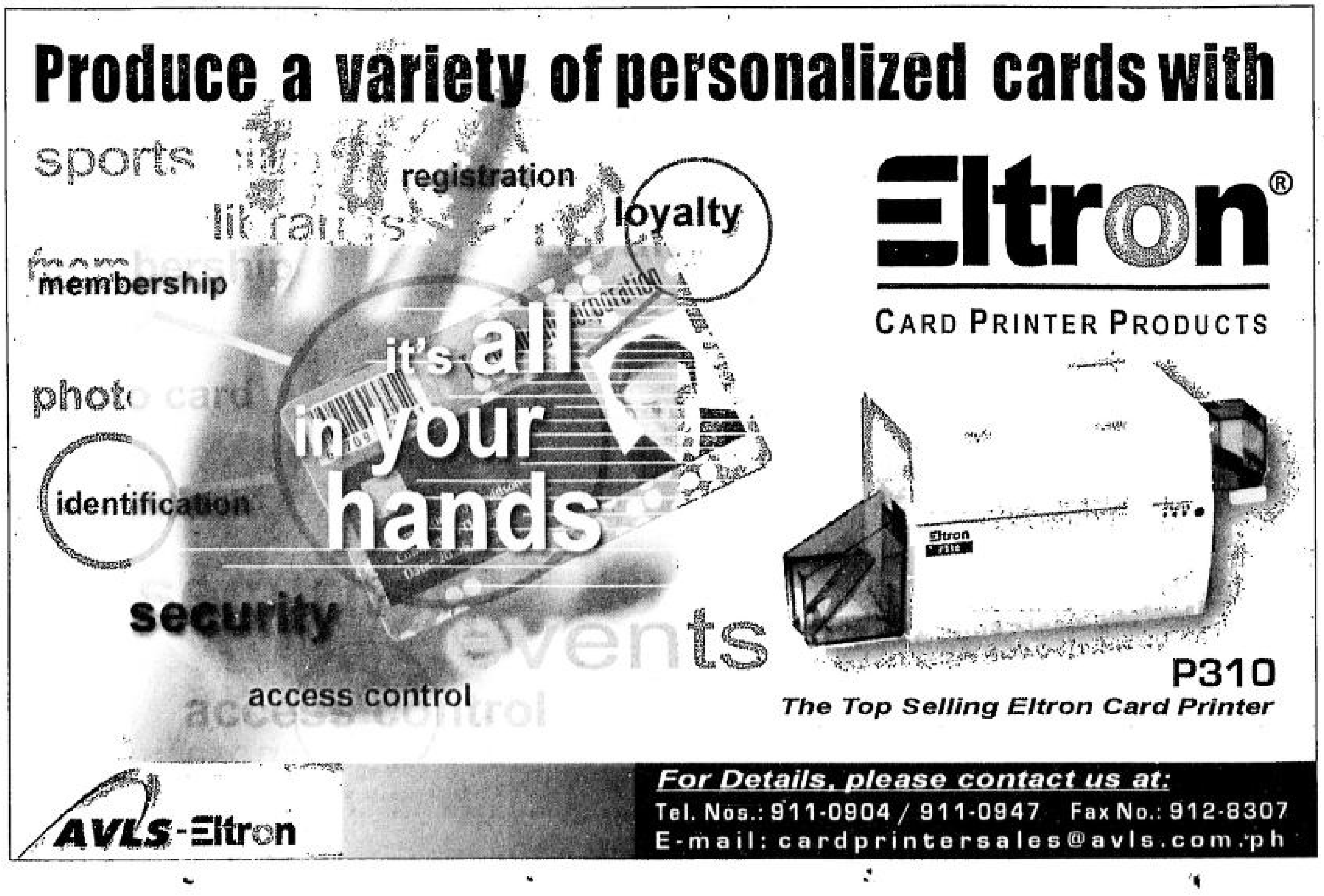

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270 LPG retail outlets found violating rules

IN SURPRISE inspections conducted on 1,003 establishments in the first six months of the year, the Luzon LPG Industry Task Force found 270 LPG retail outlets and refillers violating industry rules and practices.

A total of 2,340 LPG cylinders were also inspected and 24 percent or about 570 showed indications of "violations."

In particular, retail outlets inspected yielded a total of 300 underfilled cylinders, 115 unbranded cylinders, 71 with defective seals, 62 without tare weight markings, 4 were altered or tampered, and 17 had been illegally refilled.

Also, close to 340 cylinders or 10 percent of the 3,240 inspected cylinders held by dealers/marketers were found with the same set of violations.

The monthly inspections form part of the task force's vigilant monitoring of the LPG industry to clamp down on erring players who commit industry malpractices.

Based on the Department of Energy's (DoE) inspection summary report, the selling of underfilled cylinders and the absence of weighing devices among retail outlets topped the list of violations in the said period.

The month of March yielded the most number of violations among inspected establishments. Of the 69 inspected, 28 retail outlets were found selling underfilled cylinders, along with eight dealers and two refilling plants. Twenty-eight outlets were also found with no weighing device, according to the report that also indicated multiple violations per establishment.

Also in March, 27 outlets and four dealers were found selling LPG products without a price display board, making it the second most committed violation for the first half of the year.

Section 4 of the Revised Schedule of Penalties in the LPG Industry of 2000 penalizes first-time offenders with a reprimand/warning letter for the offense "No Price Display Board." Second-time offenders are sanctioned with a business suspension that the proper local government unit (LGU) acts upon; and third-time violators with business closure, plus criminal proceedings.

Underfilling, which comprises Section 9 of the Revised Schedule of Penalties, is penalized through corresponding fines for first- and second-time offenders.

Joselito C. Aseniero, president of the LPG Industry Association, said there were about 140 LPG refillers and 10,000 retail outlets competing in the local market today.

Aseniero said, "You have to consider that even fly-by-night operators—who sometimes cease operation after only two months—and even your neighborhood sari-sari store are part of the statistics.

Agricultural failure

ON THE MONEY

John Mangun

I ATTENDED a breakfast forum on the economy last week, where I shared a table with a noted economic thinker. He is in fact, a top economic adviser to one of the leading politicians in the country. This politician, by the way, will no doubt be on the ballot in 2004 again as a presidential candidate.

In the course of the conversation, I mentioned to him the same thing I told you last week. Economic growth is tied to agricultural production. His response was that this was just coincidental. That in fact, even if GDP tracked agri production, it was just accidental. I nearly fell off my chair.

I asked him how could you discount and ignore 15 years or 60 quarters of data that showed the agriculture growth and the economy are synonymous. He replied that agriculture accounts for only about 20 percent of the GDP and that as such was not the critical factor in growth. He said that (here comes the 2004 campaign theme) good governance and policy was much more critical. He then gave a very good and thorough presentation about the economy, which sadly did not mention much about agriculture. To support my point, I offered to send him the same chart I sent you if he would give me his fax or email number. He didn't. American author Mark Twain once wrote, "You should never try to teach a pig how to fly. It is nearly impossible to accomplish and it annoys the pig." Now, I clearly know what Mr. Twain meant.

I sincerely appreciate the comments you sent me about this idea of our failing in the agricultural sector.

Mr. Calixto Chikiamco, columnist from the Manila Standard provided me with a very interesting presentation by Dr. Arsi Balisacan and Bruce Tolentino, former agricultural undersecretaries and renowned agricultural economists. I am indebted to all these gentlemen and I would like to share with you their thoughts on this matter.

Contrary to what most "experts" believe, agriculture provides a massive "trickle-up" effect that determines the direction of the economy. Although agri accounts for only 20 percent of the GDP directly, its effects are far more reaching. In fact, when you include all agri-related manufacturing and services that depend on the state of agricultural production, it accounts for a staggering 70 percent of the GDP. We are first, last, and always an agricultural nation. In comparison, the total impact of agriculture in other nations across the region is at the highest (Thailand and Indonesia) only 50 percent of the GDP.

It is exactly what I said last week. If M.Y. San or Rebisco sells a few tens of thousands less cans of biscuits to the farmers in the provinces, people can lose jobs in Manila. That in turn means less income to the jeepney and tricycle drivers, the sari-sari stores and on and on. At the higher end of the economic scale, the company's owners have less income to spend on condominiums and the like. If the farmers' income suffers, we all suffer.

The major problem with our economy is that agri production is lower today than it was in the period from 1976 to 1981 even as our population has increased by 50 percent. Further, except for very brief periods, we have simply not been able to produce as much rice as we consume since 1981. Our total agricultural production is only 93 percent of what we produced in 1985. Malaysia produces 150 percent of their 1985 numbers. On a per hectare basis, the Philippines has only increased production by about 5 percent. Vietnam has increased production by 30 percent. We also pay a price for rice that is double or even triple what consumers pay in Thailand and even Vietnam.

The bottom line is that we are more dependent on agriculture than the other nations and we are doing a much worse job trying to feed ourselves. We have the worst of all possible worlds.

I will agree now with the economic adviser. The problem is government policy. We are spending almost the same amount today as we did in 1987. The bigger problem is that the way we spend the money to support agriculture has shifted.

Before 1987, public money was spent to increase production through irrigation and other direct improvement to the sector. Since 1987, the money has been spent on price subsidies and land acquisition through CARP. That is not to say that land reform is not an important issue. However, I would think that one of the goals was to improve the situation of the farmers but in fact, the opposite is true. Real farm income is worse today than it was in the past. And we are slipping downhill in our efforts to become agriculturally self-sufficient. To quote the studies of Balisacan and Tolentino, "Current Philippine agricultural governance is characterized by monopoly elements and regulatory constraints that induce monopolistic situations in agricultural production, services and food supplies. These market-constraining factors, combined with declining productivity and inadequate public investment, suppress agricultural growth and farmer incomes and inhibit sustainable food security."

So here is the situation we face. Our economy depends on agricultural production. But the government is either ignorant of that fact or does not want to admit it. We are losing the battle to feed ourselves and problem will become worse in the future as our population grows. The money that we are spending on agriculture is in the wrong places and may even be making the situation worse. Again the government is either ignorant of that fact or does not want to admit it. Farmers' (the people we rely on to feed us) incomes are decreasing and the government wonders why they go to the mountain with an AK-47 or M-16 and join the NPA or the MILF. This creates a danger to the social and political structure.

We have been fortunate that the weather has boosted production in the last two years. However, this economy, and therefore the country, is sitting on a time bomb that will eventually explode unless agricultural production is addressed quickly and properly. Perhaps as a start, we need to see more pictures of the President with farmers in the rice fields of Gapan, than with urban poor in the squatters' camps of Manila.

(John Mangun can be reached at 636-1121 to 35, Fax Nos. 634-2349 or e-mail at johnmangun@yahoo.com.)

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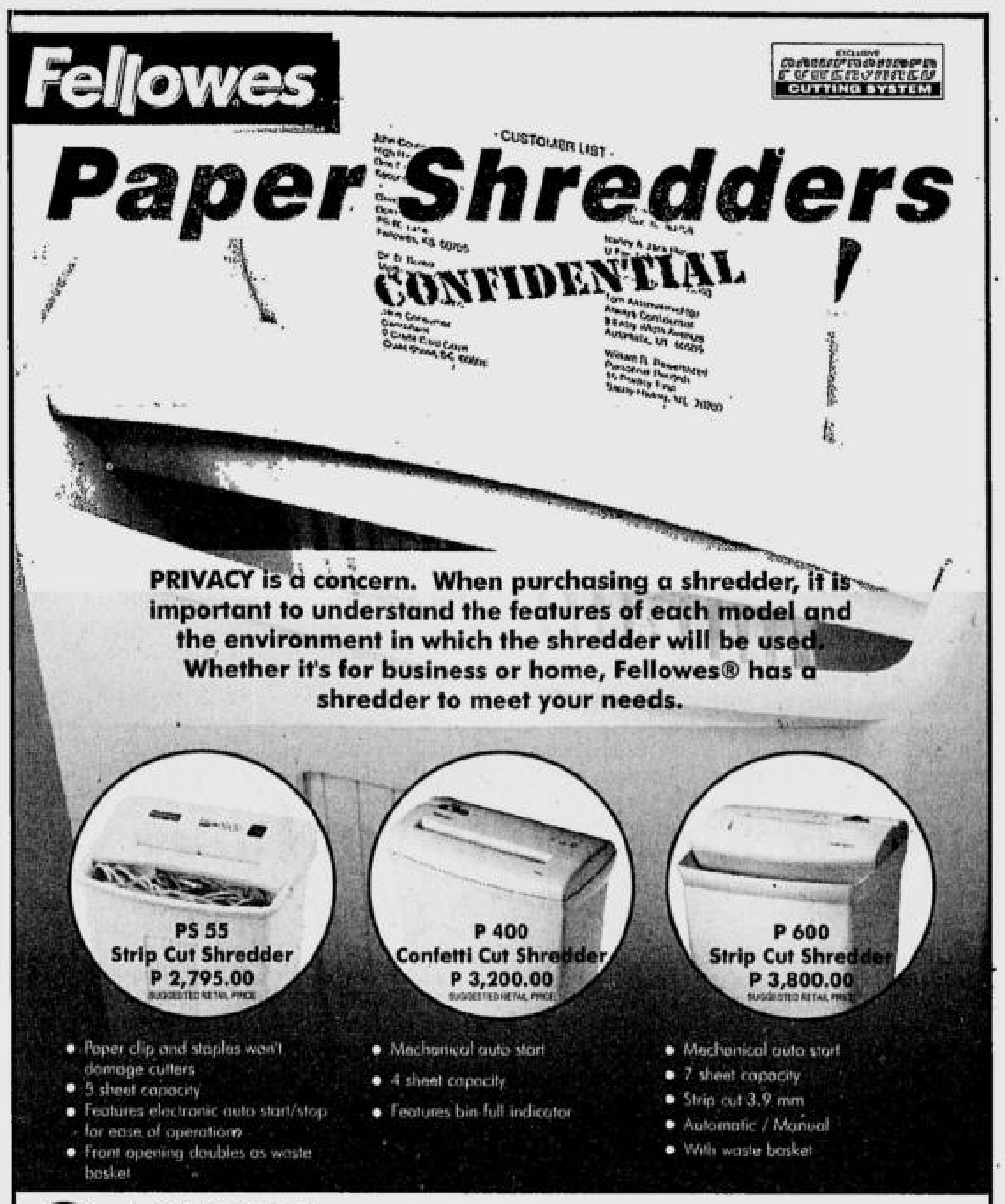

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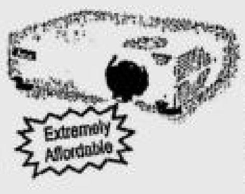
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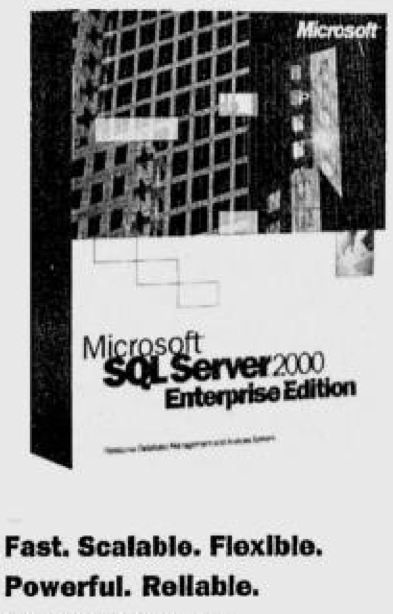

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Megaworld, Singapore firm set ₱10-B venture

By Doris C. Dumlao

PREMIER property developer Megaworld Corp. has forged a joint venture deal with Cesma International Pte. Ltd., the biggest public housing developer in Singapore, for a large-scale residential project in the Philippines estimated to cost more than P10 billion.

In a telephone interview from Singapore on Saturday, Megaworld chair and CEO Andrew Tan told the INQUIRER that the two companies would jointly form a new company that would go into a township or large-scale residential development project and sell units at affordable prices.

The memorandum of agreement between Megaworld and Cesma was signed Friday night in the presence of President Macapagal-Arroyo who was also in the city-state as part of her Asean visit. Cesma executive president Low Seng Poh signed on behalf of the Singaporean company.

Cesma was established in April 1989 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Singaporean government's Housing and Development Board (HDB) to extend the latter's more than 30 years of experience in town planning, development and design to the Asian region.

Specializing in large-scale planning and housing development, Cesma has provided planning, architectural, engineering and quantity surveying services for numerous projects in Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore during the last 10 years.

"We believe that we'll be able to benefit from the experience of HDB in Singapore," Tan said, noting that Cesma was responsible for providing housing to 95 percent of Singapore's total population equivalent to 700,000 units.

"We should be able to provide more than 10,000 affordable homes in the Philippines. This type of project, based on my own estimate, would cost more than $200 million (P10 billion)," Tan said.

The Megaworld chief said the parties have yet to determine the equity sharing for the new venture, but noted that details would be finalized within the year. Tan said Megaworld was now looking at a number of possible locations for the new project.

Asked whether the venture would be folded into Fairmont Holdings Inc., which is being groomed as Megaworld's low-cost housing arm, Tan said he has yet to decide on the matter.

Megaworld took over 70-percent control of Fairmont, formerly known as BW Resources Corp., early this year when the shares it acquired as part of an earlier property-for-share swap were freed from lock-up.

Since it went public in 1994, Megaworld has completed 26 projects including three that were finished during the first half of 2000: The Salcedo Park in Makati, IBM Plaza at the Eastwood City CyberPark and 8 Wack Wack Road in Mandaluyong City. It is also a pioneer in information technology zone development with its flagship Eastwood City Cyberpark.

Megaworld was one of the five best-performing stocks in the local bourse from January to August this year, according to Bloomberg Financial Services.

Slow trade seen to continue

By Doris C. Dumlao

ANOTHER week of slow trading awaits local stocks as the market has yet to provide any strong incentive for bargain-hunters to come in droves.

Not even the release of the 2nd quarter economic growth figures this week, which is expected to show that the Philippines had avoided a recession, would likely boost the market, analysts said.

"With the third quarter being traditionally weak for Philippine companies, expect trading to continue sideways with a downward bias," ATR Kim Eng Securities said.

Westlink Global Equities head of research James Lago said the market was still expected to be in the doldrums, with support at 1243 to 1250 and resistance at 1300.

"The global economy is in a slowdown. The local economy is weak. Everywhere we look, there is a slowdown, in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, and even Malaysia is seeing a negative growth," Lago said. "We can't go against the weak market."

Stock market portal 2tradeasia.com said that although the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index (Phisix) was already trading at oversold levels, prospective reversals would depend on a build-up in value turnover above P500 million.

"Further consolidation at comfortable support zones might take shape, to make any potential intra-week ascents convincing. This would provide investors more time in gauging their entry and exit points on select issues that offer good prospects," 2tradeasia.com said.

2tradeasia.com said its top picks for the week are: Ayala Land Inc., Ayala Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, SM Prime Holdings Inc. and First Philippine Holdings.

Lago, on the other hand, said credit has to be given to fundamentally sound stocks, which have performed well based on 2nd quarter earnings, namely BPI, Cosmos Bottling Corp., San Miguel Corp. and Petron Corp.

The Phisix last week shrugged off the quarter-point cut in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve as it broke through the 1300 psychological support. It dropped by 20 points or 1.5 percent week-on-week to close at 1286.07 on Friday.

2tradeasia.com said investors reacted to an extended languor in external developments as well as company-related concerns. Among the biggest losers last week were Benpres Corp. (8.8 percent), Ionics Circuits Inc. (6.8 percent), Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (6.4 percent), Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. (6.2 percent) and Petron Corp. (4.3 percent.)

Worst hit during the week were the banking/financial and property sectors, which slumped 1.7 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively.

"The release of the second quarter economic barometers late this week might not contribute in improving sentiment, as results might come within the forecasted 2.8-3 percent range. Most investors are heeding how authorities would address possible red flags for the succeeding quarters, including possibilities of utility tariff increases against government's planned relaxation of income taxes on individual income tax payers," 2tradeasia.com said.

"In the absence of inspiring events locally, players might look for positive stimulants overseas, part of which includes firm results from President Arroyo's five-day Asean visit. The performance of the US economy would also be in the limelight, as its recovery is hoped to signal similar moves internationally," it said.

MARKET PLAY

GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of August 27, 2001

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,650,000	1,800,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	Please Call	2,000,000
Baguio Country Club	700,000	800,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	100,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	125,000
Camp John Hay	Please Call	400,000
Canlubang	-	800,000
Canyonwoods	-	350,000
Capitol Hills	130,000	140,000
Cebu Country Club	-	2,000,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	Please Call
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	100,000	110,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	220,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	400,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	400,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	450,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	17,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	Please Call	14,000,000
Manila Polo	3,200,000	Please Call
Manila Southwoods "A"	Please Call	800,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	850,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	170,000
Mimosa Golf & Country Club (Corporate)	-	350,000
Montemar (Individual)	-	30,000
Mt. Malarayat	300,000	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	-	280,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	450,000
Philippine Columbian	-	85,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	-	170,000
Quezon City Sports Club	225,000	230,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	Please Call
Royale Tagaytay "A/B/C"	Please Call	Please Call
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	200,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,725,000	1,900,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,200,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	400,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	240,000
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands	900,000	950,000
Tagaytay Midlands	790,000	845,000
The Country Club	Please Call	Please Call
Valle Verde (Individual)	185,000	200,000
Valley Golf	250,000	275,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	7,500,000	8,100,000

PLAYING RIGHTS
(Available Lessees)
Manila Golf 450,000

(Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	40,000	Mimosa Golf	20,000
Calatagan "A"	10,000	Orchard "A"	15,000
Canlubang	70,000	Riviera "A"	15,000
Eagleridge	30,000	Sta. Elena	65,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	30,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	65,000
Manila Southwoods	40,000	Tagaytay Mid.	40,000
Makati Sports "A"	35,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	300,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

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RFM confident on Cosmos sale

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage conglomerate RFM Corp. is confident that the P15-billion sale of soft drink unit Cosmos Bottling Corp. would push through despite the suit filed by Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco.

This developed as the Quezon City Regional Trial Court issued on Friday a 72-hour temporary restraint order on the Concepcion family's sale of Cosmos to San Miguel Corp.

RFM legal counsel Cristina Reyes lamented that the TRO, which would expire today (Monday), was "issued without any hearing conducted and based on evidence, which we believe are insufficient."

Reyes added that with the completion of the raffle of the case last Friday, she expected the court to schedule the initial hearing on the TRO early this week. She said that after the evidence and arguments have been presented in court, the case would likely be dismissed.

"As far as Cosmos is concerned, it is confident that any legal proceeding will prove that Mr. Syjuco has no valid claim against Cosmos. Mr. Syjuco has been fully paid five years ago and we have all the documents, checks, receipts and even the acknowledgment of his own counsel at that time," Reyes said.

Syjuco claimed his family had not been compensated adequately for the deal that transferred control of Jaz Cola Philippines to Cosmos. Syjuco also accused Cosmos and RFM controlling shareholders, the Concepcion family, of attempting to evade taxes that should have been paid on behalf of the sellers.

Reyes explained, however, that the Concepcion family had paid the full purchase price of Jaz Cola, one of the Cosmos brands to be sold to SMC, including the taxes left behind.

"In fact, an audit of the transaction in 1997 shows that there was even an overpayment to Mr. Syjuco as certified by the SGV auditor and Emmanuel Rios, the president of Mr. Syjuco's company at that time," Reyes said.

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AS OF AUGUST 24, 2001

		ASKED PRICE	BID PRICE
1.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	Please call	-
2.	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	Please call	-
3.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000.00	-
4.	CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	900,000.00	-
5.	CAMP JOHN HAY GOLF CLUB "A"	Please call	-
6.	CAMP JOHN HAY GOLF CLUB "C"	-	Please call
7.	CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	Please call	-
8.	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	-	350,000.00
9.	EAGLERIDGE GOLD CLUB "B"	550,000.00	-
10.	FOREST HILLS "A"	250,000.00	-
11.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	350,000.00	300,000.00
12.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	400,000.00	350,000.00
13.	MANILA POLO CLUB	-	3,000,000.00
14.	MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	Please call	-
15.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	-	700,000.00
16.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	850,000.00	-
17.	MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB	-	30,000.00
18.	MT. MALARAYAT "B"	450,000.00	-
19.	ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	600,000.00	-
20.	PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	150,000.00	Please call
21.	PUNTA FUEGO (IND)	945,000.00	-
22.	PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN ASSOCIATION	85,000.00	80,000.00
23.	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	225,000.00	-
24.	RIVIERA GOLF CLUB "A"	250,000.00	-
25.	SUBIC YATCH CLUB	750,000.00 a/in	-
26.	SPLENDIDO	600,000.00	-
27.	SHERWOOD HILLS "B"	350,000.00	-
28.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	190,000.00	-
29.	VALLEY GOLF CLUB	320,000.00	Please call
30.	VERDEMAR GOLF CLUB, INC. (CEBU)	Please call	-
31.	WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	Please call	-
32.	THE COUNTRY CLUB	Please call	-
33.	OTHERS	Please call	-

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ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB	Please call
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	Please call
COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	Please call
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB	Please call
MANILA SOUTHWOODS	Please call
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB	Please call
TAGAYTAY INT'L. GOLF CLUB	Please call
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	Please call
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	Please call
WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	Please call
OTHERS	please call

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Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, August 24, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	40,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63	63.5	63	63.5	81,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	32.5	33	32.5	33	10,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	197	198	196	198	206,600
Philippine National Bank	51	51.5	51	51.5	378,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28	28	28	28	2,300
Security Bank Corp.	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	5,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	24	24	24	24	30,500
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	42,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	244	244	244	244	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	1500	1505	1500	1505	2,480
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1205	1210	1205	1210	2,520
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34.5	34.5	34	34.5	3,700
Diversified Fin. Network	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	4,340,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	630	650	615	650	470
Piltel	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	535	535	515	515	53,650
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.034	0.034	0.032	0.033	173,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	32	32	32	32	24,400
Manila Electric Co. B	43	43.5	43	43.5	1,054,900
Petron Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	165,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.98	1.98	1.96	1.96	410,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	150,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATEDPRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	600,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	59,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	147,900
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	25.5	26	25.5	26	3,200
RFM Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.32	2.32	616,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41	41.5	40.5	41	46,900
San Miguel Corp. B	55	56	55	56	132,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.4	6.1	6.4	2,036,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.56	1,114,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.88	0.91	0.88	0.88	130,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	750,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	67,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	11	10.25	11	8,100
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	1,050,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	250,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	50,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	30.5	29.5	29.5	189,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.26	3,360,000
Ionics Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,189,900
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	121,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	3,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	2,800,000
Medco Holdings	0.1	0.16	0.1	0.16	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.68	1,350,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.39	540,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	50,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5	5	5	5	40,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.34	0.3	0.34	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.29	90,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
A Brown Company Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	10,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	5	5	5	5	540,000
Music Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	166,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	20,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.8	0.81	0.8	0.81	140,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	30,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	2,950,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	980,000
Manila Jockey Club	18	18	18	18	5,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.21	220,000
Philippine Racing Club	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	1,567,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	35	35	34.5	34.5	538,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc- Pref.	510	510	510	510	200
Equitable Pci Bank-War	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1,000
Globe Tel. A - Warrants	465	465	465	465	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	225,200,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.7	4.85	14,034,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	20,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	250,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.35	0.4	0.35	0.4	31,060,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	210,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	8,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.94	1.96	1.94	1.94	1,337,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	100,000
City & Land Developers	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	2,510,000
Primex Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	40,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	1,731,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	3,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	51,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.046	0.046	0.044	0.044	5,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	20,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	1,100,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	3,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	110,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	11,900,000
Interport Res.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.004	0.0042	0.004	0.0042	8,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	1,300,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000

CURRENCIES

Aug. 24, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.092657	1.000000	51.0140
Japan	Yen	0.009120	0.008347	0.4258
United Kingdom	Pound	1.581512	1.447400	73.8377
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.140093	0.128213	6.5407
Switzerland	Franc	0.657792	0.602011	30.7110
Canada	Dollar	0.709656	0.649477	33.1324
Singapore	Dollar	0.622703	0.569898	29.0728
Australia	Dollar	0.582937	0.533504	27.2162
Bahrain	Dinar	2.898450	2.652661	135.3228
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.291352	0.266645	13.6026
Brunei	Dollar	0.621534	0.568828	29.0182
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000126	0.000115	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.024505	0.022427	1.1441
UAE	Dirham	0.297564	0.272331	13.8927
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.000785	0.0400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.915200	46.6880
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.467934	23.8712
France	Franc	0.152450	0.139521	7.1175
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.415300	21.1861
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.066510	3.3929
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022687	1.1574
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000473	0.0241
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.153926	7.8524
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004565	0.2329
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.0055	0.2806
Luxembourg	Franc	0.024789	0.022687	1.1574
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.162064	59.2815

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"In my Father's house are many rooms
I am going there to prepare a place for you
I will come back and take you to be with Me
That you may also be where I am."
John 14:2-3

CARMEN CELIS LAVARES

Peacefully joined our Lord on August 26, 2001
at the age of 54.

Her bereaved husband **Joey**; children **Carlos**, **Vincent** and **Melissa**; daughter-in-law **Carol**; grandchild **CJ**; mother-in-law **Lucia Lavares**; brother, sister and in-laws **Say** and **Norma Scwitz**, **Manny** and **Yvette Celis**, **Jimmy** and **Rina Santos**, and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Her remains lie in state at Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Her body will be cremated after a morning Requiem Mass on August 29, 2001 at the Christ the King Parish.

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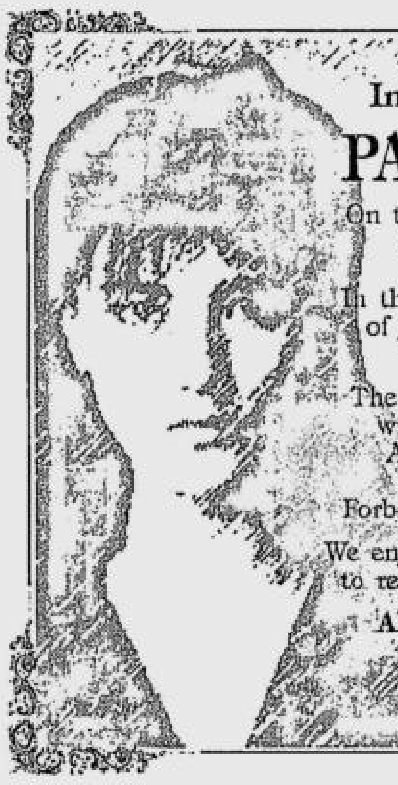


In Loving Memory of

PAOLA O. LUZ

On the 10th Anniversary of her
Birth into Eternal Life
and
In thanksgiving for the 27 years
of joy she gave us when she
was with us

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
will be offered on Tuesday,
August 28th at the crypt
of San Antonio Church,
Forbes Park, Makati at 5:30 PM

We enjoin her friends and relatives
to remember her in their prayers

ARTURO & TESSIE LUZ
ANGELA
LUISA
CLAUDIA

Lovingly Remembered

Pablo K. Asuncion, Jr.

March 24, 1958 – July 19, 2001

40th Day Commemoration of His Birth into Eternal Life

His loving brother and sisters, nephews and nieces,
relatives and friends request the pious readers
to join in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

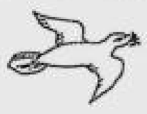
Holy Masses and Prayer Vigils will be offered
at the following churches today:

Church & Address	Time
La Virgen dela Fatima Chapel, Kawilihan Village, Pasig	7:00 PM
Santa Rosa de Lima Church, Bagong Ilog, Pasig	6:00 AM
Immaculate Conception Parish Church, Pasig	6:00 AM 12:15 PM; 6:00 PM
Redemptorists Church *(Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help)*, Baclaran	6:45 AM
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag, Pangasinan	8:00 AM
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati	6:00 PM
Don Bosco Church, Makati	6:00 PM
Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, PCIB Tower II, Makati City	7:45 AM
St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish Church, Magallanes Village, Makati	6:00 PM
St. Andrew Parish Church *(Shrine of Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso)*, La Huerta, Parañaque	6:00 AM; 6:30 AM 12:00 NN; 6:20 PM
EDSA Shrine, Mandaluyong City	12:15 PM
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills	6:15 PM
St. Joseph Parish Church, Baguio City	6:15 AM
St. Joseph Chapel, Wall Street, New York City, USA	8:15 AM
St. Augustine's Church, South San Francisco, California, USA	8:40 AM
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada	7:30 PM

Our many thanks to all who keep him
in their memory.

We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God.

2 Cor. 4:14



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❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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By BONG BARRAMEDA

Nerd

Q. Where did the word *nerd* come from?

A. Uncertain is the origin of this US slang for a contemptible or boring person, especially one who is studious, conventional, or 'square.' It seems to have arisen among American students in the 1960s, and could be an alteration of two vulgar slangs: *nert* ('nonsense' or 'nuts') and *turd* ('a despicable person'). Or maybe it is simply an allusion to a nonsense word used in Dr. Seuss's children book *If I Ran the Zoo* (1950): "And then, just to show them, I'll sail to Ka-Troo and bring back an It-Kutch, a Preep and a Poop, a Nerkle, a *Nerd*, and a Seersucker, too!"

Classified Odd. Niccolo Paganini (1872-1840), the flamboyant and romantic Italian violinist and composer, was a soloist from the age of nine. He reached the height of his success in Paris and London in 1831, and in solo concert performances he often played with frayed violin strings. Why? He was hoping that all but one would break so that he could show his skill by playing with the single remaining string.

For the Record. The world's largest flower is the rafflesia, otherwise known as the stinking corpse lily of the jungles of Borneo and Sumatra. This mottled, thick-petaled growth often reaches a diameter of three feet and a weight of 15 lbs. True to its name, the rafflesia has a highly offensive scent.

WORD WATCH

Dahlia (dal'ya) ; after Andreas Dahl, a noted 18th-century Swedish botanist.

PDI – Aug. 27, 2001

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
A. Francisco Gold Condominium II Edsa Cor Mapagmahal St.,
Diliman, Quezon City

PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date : August 23, 2001
Loan No. : PH-P201
I.F.B. No. : RWSSP V-2001-01

1. The Republic of the Philippines (GOP) has received an ODA Loan from JAPAN BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (hereinafter referred to as JBIC), in the amount of 951 million Yen towards the cost of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Phase V (RWSSP V) signed December 28, 1999, and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan to payment under the contract for supply and delivery of well rehabilitation equipment and maintenance tools.
2. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the supply and delivery of the following items under one (1) bid package:
   Bid Package : Item 1 - Well Rehabilitation Equipment - 5 units
   Item 2 - Maintenance Tools - 61 sets
3. Interested Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bid Documents at the office of:

   DILG Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (DILG-PBAC)
   c/o Water Supply and Sanitation Program Management Office (WSSPMO)
   Department of the Interior and Local Government
   5/F, A. Francisco Gold Condominium II
   EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Quezon City
4. A complete set of Bid Documents may be purchased by any interested eligible Bidder during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m, from August 29, 2001 to September 10, 2001 at the above address upon submission of a written application and payment in cash of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00). Only Bidders who purchase the Bid Documents shall be allowed to tender their bids.
5. All bids, prepared and submitted in compliance with the requirements set forth in the Bid Documents, must be delivered at the WSS-PMO, DILG, 5/F, A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Quezon City before the 1:00 PM, October 12, 2001.
6. DILG reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or infirmity contained therein and accept the bid considered most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. AGRIPINO G. MORGA**
Assistant Secretary and Chairman,
PBAC

(PDI – Aug. 25 & 27, 2001)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
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THIRD (3rd) INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND ASSEMBLY OF THE FOLLOWING:

a. Contract Package No. 13 : Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) with Overhead File Cabinet, Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) without Overhead Cabinet, Lateral Files (On Tracks with Fixed File Cabinet) and Open File Shelves;
b. Contract Package No. 13A : File Compactors; and
c. Contract Package No. 13B : File Cabinet for Maps and Index Cards

All corporations registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), with extensive experience in the supply, delivery and assembly of lateral files and compactors for office buildings, are invited to apply for pre-qualification, and bidding for Contract Package Nos. 13, 13A & 13B for the new LBP Headquarters Building in Malate, Manila, with the following schedule:

Issuance of Pre-Qualification Form	Pre-Qualification Conference	Issuance of Notice of Pre-qualification/Pre-disqualification after:	Dates of Issuance of Notices of Pre-qualification/Pre-disqualification	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Bidding Date
Aug 27 to [illegible] 2001 @ 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	Aug 31, 2001 @ 10:00 AM	a. Evaluation of Pre-qualification Documents & Brochures	Sept 12, 2001	Sept 27, 2001 @ 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	Sept 28, 2001 @ 10:00 AM	Oct 5, 2001 @ 10:00 AM
		b. Evaluation of Display versus Brochures	Sept 19, 2001			
		c. Selection of [illegible] Committee and Special Committee	Sept 26, 2001			

All interested Suppliers may obtain the Pre-qualification forms from the LBP Ad Hoc Group Office, c/o Project Management and Engineering Department (PMED), 2F LBP Bldg. III, 316 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable processing fee of P1,400.00 for the new suppliers (those who did not secure the pre-qualification documents during the first and second invitations), and P700.00 for those who have secured/submitted pre-qualification documents during the first and second invitations. Only those suppliers who secured the pre-qualification documents shall be eligible to participate in the pre-qualification process.

After the pre-qualification conference, Suppliers shall be given three (3) calendar-days to signify in writing their interest to join the pre-qualification process by accomplishing the proforma Letter of Intent (LOI) included in the pre-qualification forms issued earlier. Attendance to the pre-qualification conference is among the requirements for pre-qualification.

Duly accomplished Pre-qualification forms shall be submitted to and received at the above-stated office not later than September 6, 2001, 3:00 PM, after which no documents will be accepted. All participating suppliers shall be notified in writing of the results of the pre-qualification.

Only pre-qualified suppliers may secure Bid Documents at the above-stated office/date upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P6,000.00.

Pre-Qualification and Pre-Bid conferences will be held on the above-stated date and time at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 316 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

Bidding shall be conducted using the two (2) envelope system (envelopes "A" & "B") to be submitted to and received not later than 10:00 AM on October 5, 2001 (the Bidding Date). Bidding shall be held at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2/F, LBP Bldg. III, 316 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

LBP reserves the right to change the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference and bidding date. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by LBP to pre-qualified bidders.

LBP likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense/loss that they may incur during the preparation of their bids, and to accept the bid that is most advantageous to the Bank.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO T. HERNANDEZ**
Chairman
Sub-Committee for LBP HQ Bldg. Project

(PDI – Aug. 25, 26 & 27, 2001)

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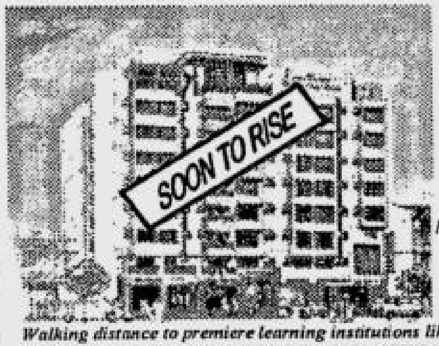

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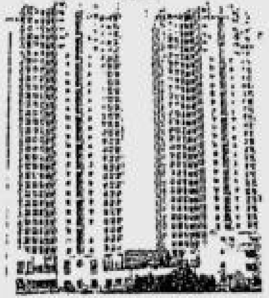

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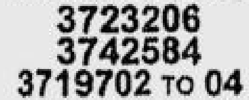

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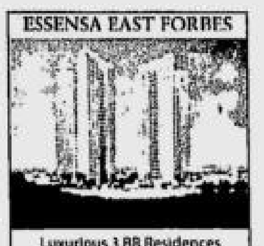

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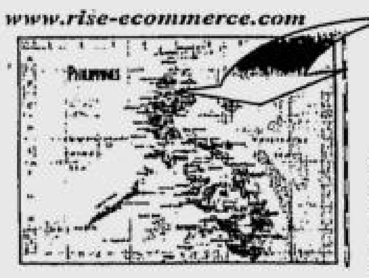

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CP # 0919-4339797 / 0919-8990289

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Ms. Marilou Espiritu
84C Doña Soledad Ave., Better Living,
Parañaque City Tel. # (02) / 821-1188
/821-4764 / Telefax # (02) 821-1155
CP # 0919-4482698
Orientation Schedule: Aug. 31 & Sept. 1, 2001
(Fri. & Sat.) @ 4 PM – 6 PM
E-mail: lhouespiritu@yahoo.com

RISE E-CUBAO
Ms. Nila D. Cañezal
Rm 403 Diamond Bldg., 603 EDSA
Cubao, Quezon City
Tel. #(02)418-2729/CP # 0917-4948023

RISE – PACO
Mr. Allan T. Resterio
1155 JL Escoda St., Paco Market,
Paco, Manila
Tel. # (02) 562-0645 / 524-9549
CP # 0919-8012633 / 0917-4987682

RISE – Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. # (02) 931-8003
CP # 0917-8374464

RISE CYBIZ-QUEZON CITY
Ms. Le Guzman
#18 Antonio Luna, Proj. 4, Q.C.
Tel. # (02) 9138564
CP # 0917-3871028/ 0919-832-8771
Email: go4gold@edsamall.com.ph

RISE E-Novaliches
Ms. Emma C. Daniel
#223-E General Luis cor. Gold Sts.,
Novaliches, Q.C.
Tel. # (02) 935-8381 / 983-0346
CP # 0919-8723689

SOON TO LAUNCH...

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106-B Rd. 20, Project 8, Quezon City
Tel. # (02) 425-1443/454-0600/454-0619
Fax #(02) 927-2314 CP# 0917-3502595
Email: rrreds@pacific.net.ph
Orientation: *9 AM – 6 PM (Tues. – Sat.)*

RISE Roosevelt, Quezon City
Ms. Meryle Taaca
Unit 7, 3rd Flr., 316 Roosevelt Ave.,
SFDM, Quezon City
Tel # (02) 330-9259
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(Schedule of Trainings: Tues. & Thurs. @ 2 PM and Sat. @ 9:30 AM & 2 PM)
Ms. Tonith Bornolla
Tel. # (075) 523-4264/CP# 0917-7420556
Ms. Imelda Sarmiento (075) 515-6755
CP# 0919-6649784
Ms. Emily Soriano (075) 515-4066
43 Perez Blvd., Dagupan City
CP # 0917-3654775

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Unit 305, University Center,
National Hi-way, Biñan, Laguna
Tel. # (049) 839-0878
CP # 0919-8195899 / 0919-5766235

RISE DINS E-COMMERCE, BAGUIO CITY
Engr. Ferdinand G.Tangalin
Ms. Bella Navalta
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110 Session Rd., Baguio City
CP # 0919-2182997 / 0919-6709848

RISE – MARULAS, VALENZUELA CITY
Ms. Mildred D. Datuin *(contact person)*
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Hi-way, Marulas, Valenzuela City
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RISE – PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN
Mr. Nixon M. Edora
BM Road, Puerto Princessa City
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RISE – KALIBO, AKLAN
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Tel. # (036) 262-3562
CP # 0917-6445180 / 0917-8441050

RISE – NYALA BACOLOD
Ms. Maria Suzita "Zitte" Diaz-Ea
NYALA RENT-A-CAR
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Tel. # (034) 433-1049 / 434-4589
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NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **APV PHILIPPINES, INC.** has filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission an Amendment of its Articles of Incorporation, shortening its corporate life to **December 31, 2001**.

Any person who may have a claim against said corporation may present the same to MS. PERMA NAVARROZA at the principal office at 7/F Common Goal Tower Finance Street, Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

The announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) **ELIZER A. ODULIO**
Corporate Secretary
APV Philippines, Inc.

(PDI – Aug. 17, 24 & 27, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Public is hereby advised to desist from transacting, contracting and/or doing business with people who claim any connection with the Rise Group of Companies and/or RISE E-COMMERCE SYSTEMS, INCORPORATED except through our accredited Business Center Operations (BCOs) and authorized representatives.

Reports of deceptive activities of certain group/s have reached our knowledge. Apparently, these people are only riding onto the popularity of our company, which they claim they are part of, and of the Systems we introduced.

Let it be known that Rise E-Commerce Systems, Incorporated is not securing payments for subscription fee from interested consumers without proper documentation and that *we have not authorized anybody*, including our BCOs and authorized representatives, *to demand advance payments for basic commodities and/or other products and services* which we cater to our regular consumers. For subscriptions to our Systems or for payments of goods or services, please transact only direct to our accredited BCOs, suppliers and/or depository banks. Please exercise proper incredulity.

It is imperative, therefore, that all necessary transactions and business agreements be done through our accredited Business Center Operations (BCOs) located in strategic areas nationwide or through our corporate headquarters located at Suite 1906 Robinson's Galleria Corporate Center, EDSA corner Ortigas Complex, Quezon City.

We enjoin the public to verify with us first before entering into any financial transaction and/or notify us of any knowledge about these unscrupulous/doubtful activities.

Warning is hereby given to those involved in this illegal act as they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

THE MANAGEMENT

RISE GROUP OF COMPANIES
RISE E-COMMERCE SYSTEMS, INC.
Tel. Nos. (02)687-2921; 687-0941; 687-1737
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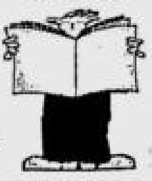

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Adtel signs up at Telecomex Asia 2002

ADTEL, Inc., a member of the Lopez group of companies, has once again confirmed its participation in the largest and most established telecommunications, broadcasting and networking event in the Philippines. Dubbed as Telecomex Asia 2002, this 7th show series will be held simultaneously with Asia MobileComm 2002, Asia Broadcast 2002, Asia Cable & Satellite 2002, Asia Pro-Audio 2002 and Asia Networking 2002 from May 15 to 18, 2002 at the World Trade Center, Metro Manila.

Adtel represents foreign principals engaged in providing diverse communications hardware and software technologies. Recently, Adtel generated sales for Digidesign, maker of ProTools Digital Audio Workstation. The ProTools system by Digidesign has become the industry standard for audio professionals who produce music, multimedia, radio and film.

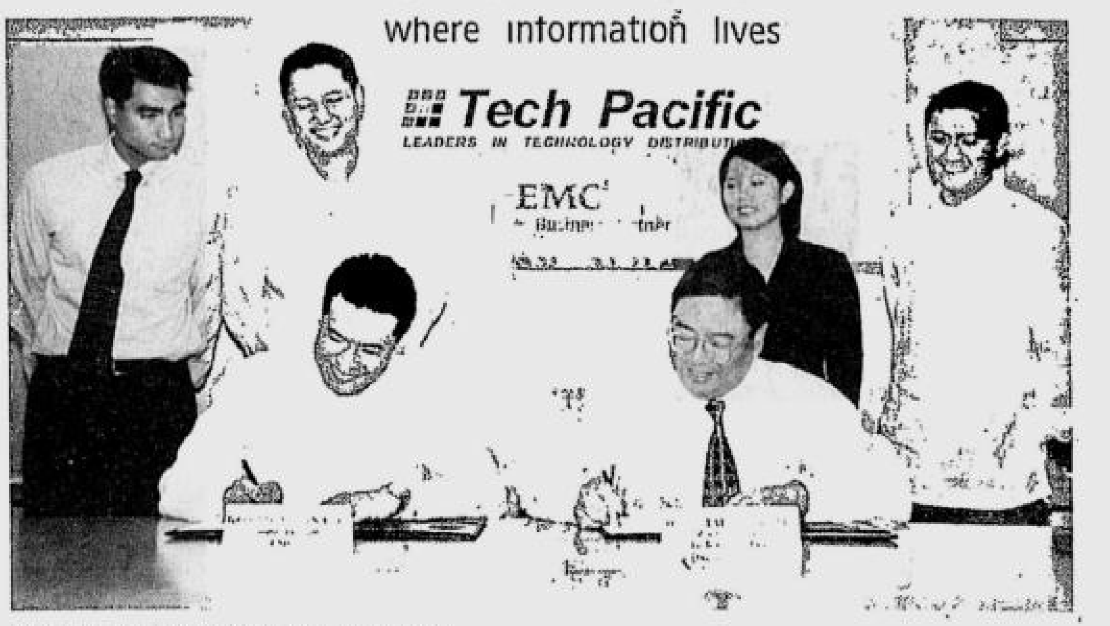
Adtel also established a two-way video transport system over the fiber optic network linking ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and SkyCable. The DV6400 Multichannel Transport System by ADC, supplied and installed by Adtel, is an uncompressed system and transmits the entire video signal intact, improving signal transmission.

ABS-CBN has been supplied by Adtel with three new video server systems or media platforms. This three Profile XP Video server systems are now operational and being used by ABS-CBN's UHF Channel Studio 23, MYX Music Channel, and for allowing commercials to be aired separately in various regions, a process known in the industry as "dechaining" or "decoupling". The software was designed by US-based Grass Valley Group.

The IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) high-speed information network was likewise built by Adtel with support from 3M Philippines, Eupen Cable and JCE Building. Adtel installed a full-fiber optic network called 3M Volition Network Solution using a 16-km cable from Eupen, creating a fiber optic backbone in the IRRI campus in Laguna.

Adtel has always been a staunch supporter of the Telecomex Asia show series since 1994. In last year's show series, Reggie T. Casas, Adtel president, said, "Adtel's core competence is to represent the interests of foreign principals engaged in communication and broadcasting technology. Telecomex fits the business portfolios of Adtel as it caters to key customers principally engaged in public utilities. Telecomex is an optimum alternative to be visible to the public eye. Overall, it is the best avenue to attain the rate of visibility needed by the company."

For more information about Telecomex Asia 2002, call Jennifer G. Sy, marketing manager of HQ Link Philippines Inc. at 810-5685, 810-3694, 894-4771, fax 815-3152 or e-mail hqlink@i-next.net.



EMC APPOINTS TECH PACIFIC

EMC country manager for the Philippines Ronnie Latinazo (seated, left) signs the appointment of Tech Pacific Philippines as the office distributor to carry EMC's mid-range storage market in the Philippines. Shown are (from left, standing, for EMC) Rene Tablante, senior technical partner manager and Teddy Sumulong, channels manager. Jesus Jaime Lantin, general manager (seated, right); Johanna Nonato, product manager, and Virgilio Villarico, marketing manager, are shown for Tech Pacific Philippines.

ALL FOR THE CHILDREN

AstraZeneca signed a contract with IBM Phils. on the occasion of the latter's donation of two units of Young Explorer Fun and Learning IBM Computer, each encased in Little Tikes furniture with corresponding benches, to AstraZeneca Philippine Community Foundation Inc. The donation will serve as one of the grants in the launching of AstraZeneca's Multicare Division Zoiron Christmas card-making contest, a contest open for kids from Kinder 1 to Grade 7, with the purpose of bringing out the best in children. Present were Richard Burgos (communications manager, IBM Phils.) Melanie Arcilla (communications coordinator, IBM Phils.) Ramon Dimacali (IBM Phils. chair) Carmen Gutierrez (HR manager, AstraZeneca), Edgardo Liamzon (production supervisor, AstraZeneca and vice chair of AstraZeneca Community Foundation), Ruby Palma (HR director, AstraZeneca), Romy Sy (vice president, multicare and business development), and Adonis Samatra (product promotions manager, Multicare AstraZeneca).

TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION, INC.

TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION SCHOLARS

Seventy-seven college freshmen from different parts of the archipelago comprise the latest batch of scholars sponsored by the Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc. and the University of the East (UE). Shown is Tan Yan Kee chair and president Dr. Lucio C. Tan (center, second row) with the students during the recent recognition of scholars at the Allied Bank Center, Makati. Also shown are (seated, second row) Tan Yan Kee trustees Harry Tan and Mariano Tanenglian (fifth and sixth from left) UE chair P.O. Domingo (8th from right) and Dr. Josefina Cortes, UE president. Through the scholarship program launched in 1998, UE and the Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc. help young students fulfill their dreams of finishing college while specializing in math, science and other technical courses.

CAFÉ VIA MARE IN EASTWOOD CITY

Shown cutting the ribbon at the newly opened Café Via Mare and Oyster Bar in Eastwood City are (from left) Marvie C. Yulo, owner, with special guests Vilma Valera, Mel Mathay, Regina Yulo and Jose Yulo. At the back are (from left) Ferds Trinidad and Sol Trinidad (both partly hidden); Jopy Torrijos, Glenda Baretto, Julie Hidalgo and Annette Talatala.

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED SOUTH COTABATO COOPERATIVE BANK (Koronadal, South Cotabato), INC.

1. The Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) shall start claims settlement operations in the closed South Cotabato Cooperative Bank (Koronadal, South Cotabato), Inc. for insured deposits with balances over P10,000.00 up to the statutory limit of P100,000.00 per depositor and resume receiving/processing claims for those with balances of P10,000.00 and below. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from August 28 to September 11, 2001, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.
2. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence or deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed South Cotabato Cooperative Bank (Koronadal, South Cotabato), Inc. is on December 3, 2002. After December 3, 2002, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - Aug 27, 2001)

Moms, babies flock to Kimbies booths

HUNDREDS of moms and babies flocked to the Kimbies booths at the Ever-Gotesco Malls in Ortigas-Extension, Commonwealth, C.M. Recto and Grand Central during a four-day special event dubbed "Mommy, Kimbies and Me" sponsored by Kimbies. The event culminated at the Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall in Cainta.

Kimboy – the official Kimbies mascot -- also rendered special dance numbers to the delight of the kids who tagged along with their moms during the mall-selling event.

For a minimum purchase of P100 worth of Kimbies Belt-Style, new Kimbies Plus and/or new Kimbies Diaper Pads from the booth or supermarket, consumers were entitled to join the "Pick-A-Prize" promo wherein they were able to bring home special gift items on the spot.

The purchase also allowed mothers and babies to free medical check-ups at the "OK (Operation Kalinga) Kay Nanay at Baby" corner. Pediatricians and OB-gynes provided moms with professional advice and guidelines on personal health care and proper baby care. After the free consultation, babies were also treated to a free diaper change at the "Palit Diaper Corner" in each Kimbies booth.

Kimbies Belt-Style diapers, new Kimbies Plus disposable diapers and new Kimbies Diaper Pads are quality products of Kimberly-Clark Philippines Inc.

Powerpuff Girls, Johnny Bravo team up for Swift

SWIFT Mighty Meaty Hotdogs, a quality product of RFM Corporation, gives away Powerpuff Girls and Johnny Bravo water containers that are perfect school companions for your kids. The fun items featuring the much sought-after Cartoon Network characters come free in every purchase of 500-gram Swift Mighty Meaty Hotdogs in selected supermarkets nationwide.

FINDME BAGS FEDEX CONTRACT

FedEX Philippines has signed up FindME to provide mapping and GPS (global positioning system) tracking services for up to 300 FedEX vehicles, Lopez Communications Group CEO Gabby Lopez (second from left) shakes hands on the deal with Bert Lina, chair of the Lina group of companies – sole licensee of FedEX in the Philippines – while FindME president Bernie Abis (left) and BayanMAP Corp. president Edwin Domingo look on. Lina said FedEX chose FindME because of its superior technology and accurate maps. FindME, majority-owned by the Lopez Group's BayanMAP, is the only location-based content provider that has significant presence in the country.

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The search is on for outstanding business leaders with exemplary achievements in their respective fields and who can best inspire fellow Filipinos to dedicate their lives in service of their fellow Filipinos. The 4th Aurelio Periquet Jr., business leadership awards was launched at the 8th regular general membership meeting of the Manila Jaycees held recently at the Galaxias Room of the Manila Diamond Hotel and put into motion a four-month search for two young, successful visionaries of the business world. Above, Rep. Anna Marie Periquet (center), daughter of Dr. Aurelio Periquet Jr., who inspired the awards, signs a memorandum of agreement with Tessa M. Jazmines (right), president and Angela P. Coloma (left) senior PR manager of Larc & Asset PR Consultants as the official PR Agency of this year's APJ-BLA.

SUPPLY ALLIANCE AGREEMENT SIGNED

Mirant Philippines, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Mirant Corporation, a global competitive energy company, enters into selective supply alliance agreements to ensure cost-effective availability of needed materials for uninterrupted power plant operations. Shown signing one such agreement for the accelerated availability of Swagelok products are (seated, from left) engineer George K. Lamela, Jr., assistant vice president, Mirant materials management department; George H. Peredo, president and chair, Manila Fluid System Components Inc., exclusive distributor of Swagelok Company in the Philippines and James S. Brookes, Jr., Pagbilao Power Station C&I superintendent. Witnessing the event are James F. Dulot, Mirant logistics manager; engineer Jun B. Bellen, Pagbilao Power Station warehouse supervisor; and Alejandro Lito R. Aprieto, Mirant purchasing manager. Also present are Moses C. Aragones and Antonio D. de Leon, area managers of Manila Fluid System Components Inc. Also shown are materials management team leaders and staff of Mirant Philippines.

WELCOME
DEFENSIVE DRIVING

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Drivers, lecturers and officers of the Corporate Guarantee and Insurance Company (CGIC), a non-life insurance firm based in San Fernando City (Pampanga), pose after a one-day seminar on defensive driving sponsored by CGIC. The seminar was headed by Gilbert M. Fernandez, CGIC vice president/general manager (center with glasses), Nicolette Mostajo, training and development officer of the Laus Group of Companies (LGC); Rosita Simbulan, LTO licensing officer; Irene Torrico, training assistant; Sarah Gregorio, senior human resource assistant; Eden Ronquillo, CGIC assistant vice president for retail marketing; Danny Montemayor, CGIC marketing manager and Ronald Dabu, LTO lecturer and examiner. CGIC, an LGC subsidiary and one of the leading non-life insurance outfits in the country, marked its 4th anniversary last month.

INFOTECH

LEO MAGNO, Editor

Cyberactivists push for Sept. 1 boycott of cell phone operators

BY JOEY G. ALARILLA

PROTESTERS are now calling on all Globe Telecom and Smart Communications Inc. subscribers not to use their cellular phones to send SMS (short message service) messages or make voice calls on Sept. 1. This planned boycott comes in the wake of an announcement by Globe Telecom and Smart Communications Inc. that they would reduce the free text-message allocations of prepaid and postpaid subscribers.

"Globe and Smart are very wise by making the changes together in oligarchic fashion . . . much to the disadvantage of the consumers. The consumers, us, have no other choice because Globe and Smart are the only GSM providers (Talk N' Text is owned by Smart while Islacom is owned by Globe)," read an e-mail manifesto submitted to different mailing lists. The subject line read, in true text fashion: ''Protst d fri rductn Pls suprt boyct of smrt&glb by not txtn or kolin on sept 1."

Globe and Smart intend to cut down by as much as 60 percent the free SMS allocations currently bundled with their subscriber plans and prepaid cards.

The call for the Sept. 1 boycott is also making the rounds, fittingly enough, via text messages. The Philippines, after all, is considered the SMS capital of the world, and the so-called text brigade and online protests played crucial roles in mobilizing people and toppling former President Joseph Estrada in January.

Meanwhile, a separate e-mail is also making the rounds with an attached form for consumer complaints against Globe and Smart. The message also indicates the customer service e-mail addresses of the two mobile giants.

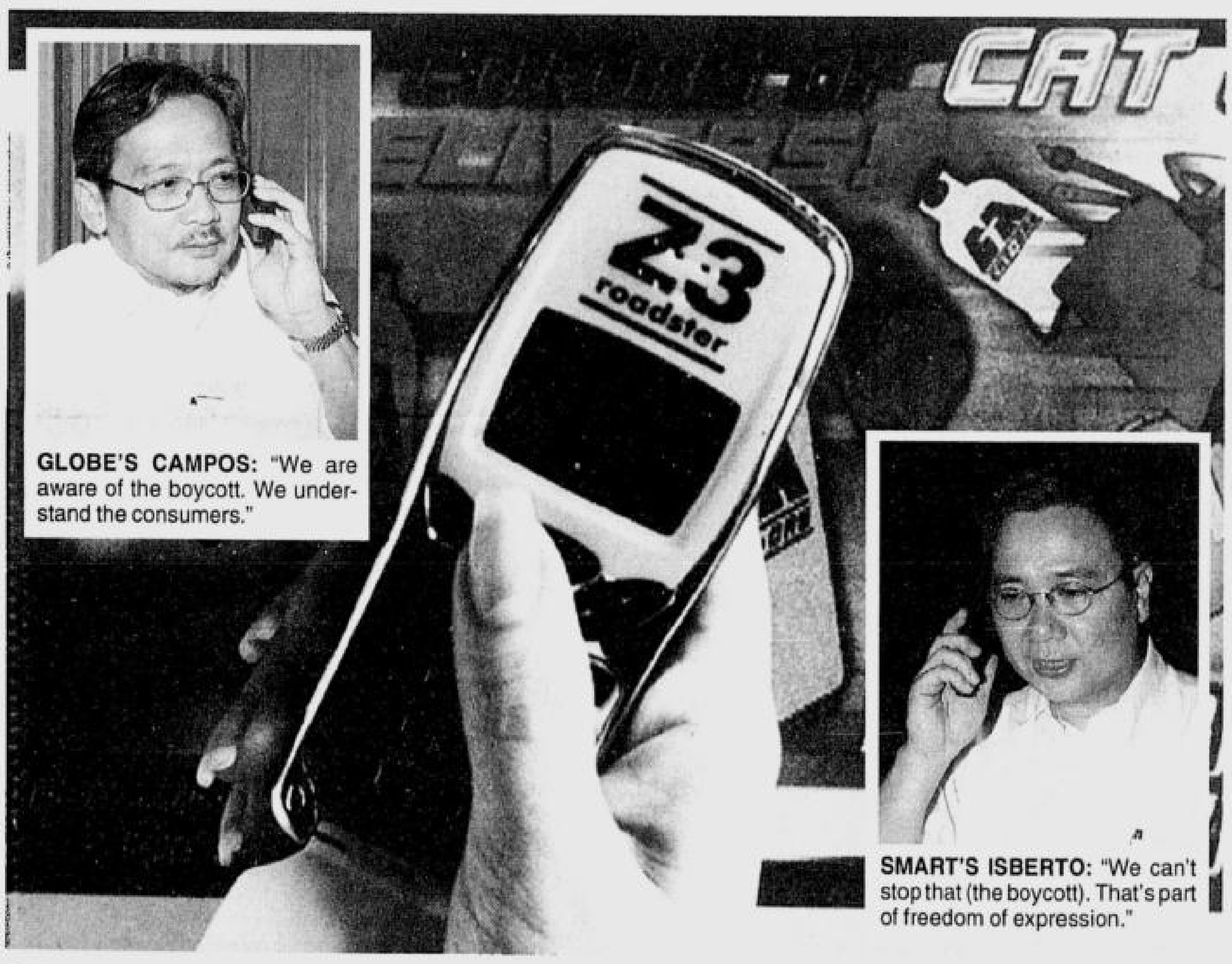
The non-profit consumer advocacy group Philippine League for Democratic Telecommunications Inc. (PLDTI), issued Thursday a press statement denouncing the moves of Globe, Smart and Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), which offers the Talk N' Text service. Smart and Piltel are both under the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. group.

"We are definitely supporting it (the boycott) as a form of protest. But of course, we're looking at going beyond that," PLDTI president Jonathan Domingo told the INQUIRER.

Meanwhile, Globe and Smart officials said that they understand the sentiments of the public.

"We are aware of the boycott. We can understand the feeling of the consumers," said Jones Campos, assistant vice president for public relations of Globe.

CYBERACTIVISTS/ p. B12



GLOBE'S CAMPOS: "We are aware of the boycott. We understand the consumers."

SMART'S ISBERTO: "We can't stop that (the boycott). That's part of freedom of expression."

GLOBE Telecom plans to cut effective Sept. 10 the number of free text messages that their subscribers can send from 150 to 50 for those using prepaid cards. Smart Communications is slashing its free text messages to 33, 83 and 250 from its existing 100-, 250- and 750-allocation. The result: a revolution from the Text Generation.

RP users gobbling up iPAQs

COMPAQ officials reported Friday that the iPAQ, the sleek handheld device manufactured by the company, has been a hit in the Philippines after selling more than 1,000 units in the first half of 2001.

Nilo Cruz, president and CEO of Compaq Philippines, said the company aims to ship 2,000 more units in anticipation of an increasing demand toward the end of the year. Cruz said that at least 5 percent of Compaq Philippines' revenues comes from sales of the handheld device.

"It could have been more if we had enough supply," Cruz admitted, as he cited the computer manufacturer's problems of coping with the global demand when it launched the product in August 2000.

Compaq claims to have sold more than 1 million iPAQ units a year after it was launched in the global market—a feat that Palm was not able to do, Cruz said.

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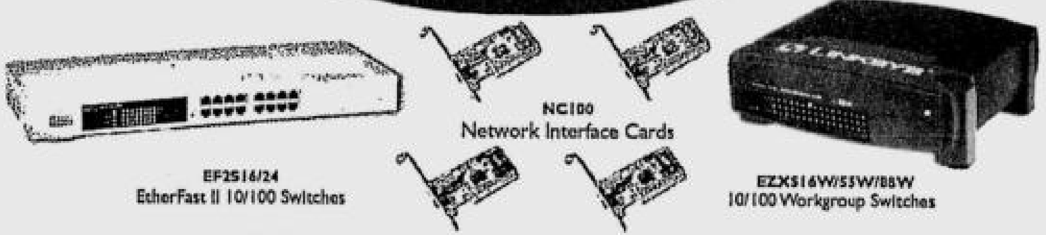

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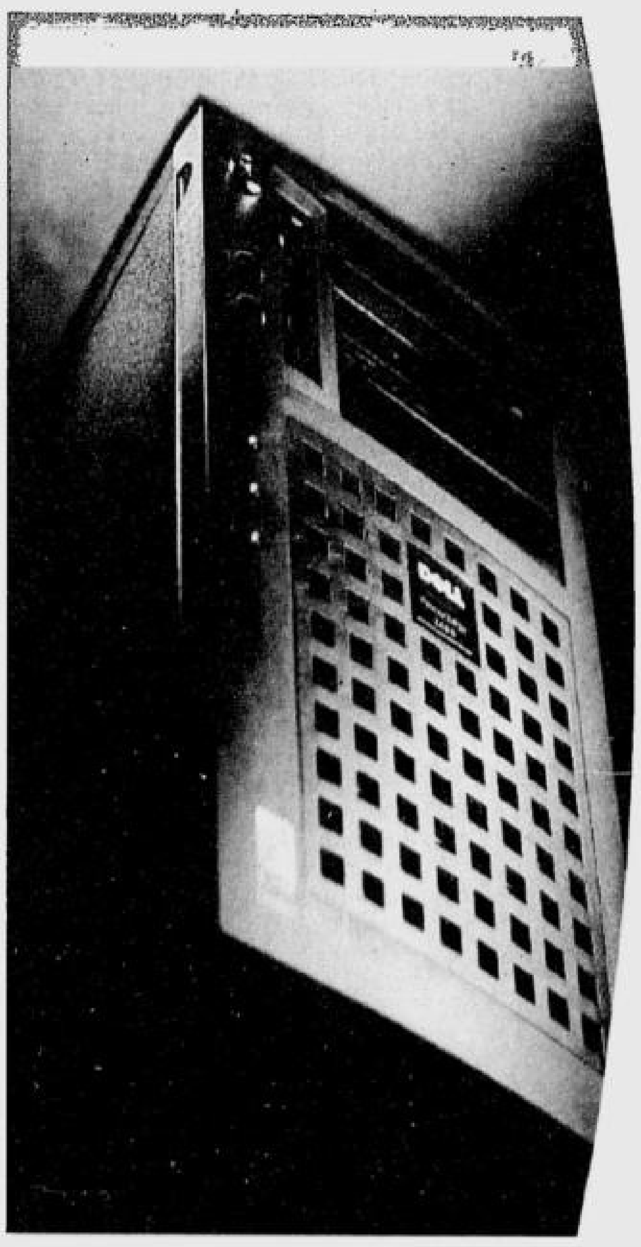

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Big names in electronic world joining ICT Show 2001

HIGH technology companies from both here and abroad have signed up to join what is touted to be the biggest ICT Show to be presented from Sept. 21 to Oct.14 at the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan, Metro Manila.

The ICT Show 2001 is designed to provide opportunities for technical and business cooperation, commercial transaction and technology transfer in an open market. The event comes at the heels of the Macapagal administration's declaration that the ICT will propel the country into the international scene which can help uplift the Philippine economy.

Vying for center stage is network giant Globe Telecom. Going all out in its approach to display and sell its products and services, it shall occupy a vast showcase area specifically designed and constructed for the occasion.

Also included in this gathering are top corporate ICT companies such as Intel, Canon Philippines, Fujitsu, Nextel Communications, Nokia, Ericsson, Siemens, Panasonic, Motorola and Ambassador Appliances.

An array of IT schools such as Informatics Computer Institute, Genetic Computer Institute of the Philippines plus others have also confirmed their par-

BIG/ p.B13

DISINI VS CONTRERAS

Landmark 'electronic' libel case dismissed

By Leo Magno

THE LIBEL case filed by Emmanuel "Joel" Disini against fellow IT executive Fernando Contreras Jr. has been dismissed for lack of evidence. This case extensively used statements contained in electronic documents such as e-mail, an online newspaper and a PowerPoint presentation and presented as evidence in a Philippine court.

In a resolution penned by the Office of the City Prosecutor in Pasig, case No. PSG 01-05-10672, filed by Disini against Contreras, states that malice is not present in any of the defendant's statements, and that the statements "do not indicate anything that would portray the complainant as an unethical businessman or extortionist."

The legal resolution obtained by the INQUIRER states: "After evaluating the evidence, there is no sufficient evidence to engender a well-founded belief that Article 354 of the Revised Penal Code had been violated and that the respondent is probably guilty thereof and should be held for trial."

Article 354 contains provisions for the requirement of a libelous statement to be considered malicious and to have been made public.

On May 29, Disini sued Contreras for libel, seeking $1 million in moral damages and $1 million in exemplary damages. Disini is CEO of DotPH and administrator of the Philippine country-code top-level domain. Contreras is the spokesperson and one of the founders of the Philippine Domain Authority Conveners or PhilDAC, a non-profit organization which seeks to have the administration of the PH domain redelegated to it.

In a landmark case wherein electronic documents were presented as evidence, the court found no cause for the case to be pursued. Evidence presented by the complainant were mainly based on a PowerPoint presentation made publicly by Contreras on March 27 in a meeting of Piso. The defendant's counteraffidavit likewise contained electronic documents as evidence which supposedly shows that Disini also committed libel against Contreras. These include e-mail allegedly sent by Disini to two mailing lists—that of the Philippine Internet Commerce Society and another allegedly sent to hatchlings@yahoogroups.com. Also submitted as evidence were copies of e-mail from Rudolfo Villarica and an article written by Jim Ayson which came out online at www.inq7.net.

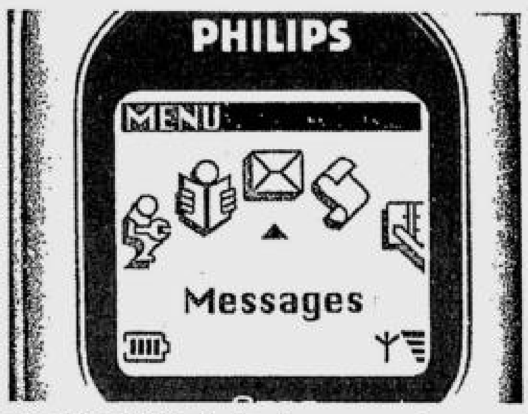
The court was candid in the manner by which it made its resolution in this landmark high-technology case where executives of the Philippine technology industry presented high-tech documents as evidence.

"This office will not venture to pretend to have extensive knowledge of matters concerning the Internet," the resolution reads. "It does not, however, take special knowledge, skill or know-how to assess the import of the subject statements." The court further adds that Contreras' statements do not portray Disini as an "unethical businessman or extortionist."

The resolution also goes back to the elements of libel, defamation and privileged communication, and used these to determine that no malicious intent could be found on the part of Contreras, whether or not the case is about electronic documents made public on the Internet.

HYPERLINKS

Due to space constraints we are printing a condensed version of this article. Read the full story in today's Infotech section of www.inq7.net



THE MEDIUM is the (text) message. Consumer groups are staging a boycott of cellular phone operators and their services on Sept. 1 because of news that Smart and Globe will trim down the number of free text messages available from their short message service (SMS). In a country sometimes called the text capital of the world, depriving people of the pleasure of text can drive people insane.

Cyberactivists push for Sept. 1 boycott of cell phone operators

(From page B11)

Campos, however, reiterated that Globe has clearly stated the reasons for the reduction, namely the foreign currency exchange and the need to invest in the expansion and improvement of its network.

Meanwhile, Smart head of public affairs Ramon Isberto also stressed that Smart has valid reasons for reducing the free SMS allocation.

"Obviously, we can't stop that (the boycott), That's part of freedom of expression. I understand and I share their disappointment with the situation. But I hope people will look at it not only in the context of the telecommunications industry, but also of what's happening to the country," Isberto stressed.

He pointed out that cell phone companies are facing a dilemma.

"Cell phone companies are under tremendous pressure from competition to expand the network and from subscribers to improve the quality and diversity of services," Isberto explained.

He noted that this pressure is also generated by text messages, pointing out that the sheer volume of text messages has entailed the continuous expansion of Smart's GSM network. He also said that free text messages still generate the bulk of SMS traffic.

In a closed-door meeting with National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) officials, Globe and Smart have agreed to review their plan to offer fewer free text messages. NTC chief Eliseo Rio, however, was quoted as saying that the final decision will be up to the mobile giants.

Asked if the boycott would still push through in light of this new development, Domingo said: "Let's see first what they're planning to do. If they withdraw their plan, then we may rescind the boycott."

PLDTI is only one of the groups and individuals supporting the boycott. Domingo admitted that he just learned about the boycott from text messages, though he himself had considered this move.

"I'm pretty sure more than one person thought of it," he said.

In the e-mail manifesto calling for the boycott, one of the most drastic measures proposed was for cell phone plan (postpaid) subscribers to delay the settling of their accounts by one month.

"Your line will not be cut yet as they normally cut your line 60 days after past due. This will really make Globe and Smart feel our protest as a drastic reduction of their collections will severely affect their cash position!" the e-mail declared.

Asked to comment on this radical form of boycott, Isberto replied: "What would be the point of that? Let me put it this way: The whole point of this exercise (free-text reduction) is to further improve and expand the network. Think in the long-term. This (delaying the payment of cell phone bills) will be counterproductive not only to the company (Smart), but to consumers as well."

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Fujitsu to stop manufacturing disk drives in RP

BY ERWIN OLIVA

THE LOCAL subsidiary of Japanese computer and electronics firm Fujitsu Ltd. plans to halt production of hard disk drives for personal computers as a result of the slump in the global PC market.

"Most likely we're gearing toward putting an end to the manufacture of hard disk drives for the desktop (PC) market," Ernie Espinosa, assistant vice president of human resources development and general affairs of Fujitsu Computer Products Corp. of the Philippines (FCPCP), told the INQUIRER.

The company is at the stage of finishing all "pending" orders of hard disk drives for PCs until September or October, he added.

This developed after Monday's announcement that Fujitsu Ltd. would undergo a comprehensive corporate revamp that will result in the layoff of more than 16,000 employees worldwide. The job cuts will reportedly most affect operations in the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Espinosa said the slowdown in the US market and the shrinking global PC market have forced the subsidiary to focus on producing hard disk drives for high-end computers called servers, including file servers used for storing huge amounts of data.

"But as for employee job cuts in the local plant, we're not really ready to talk about it. We're still discussing and finalizing our plans for restructuring," Espinosa added.

He said the subsidiary will make further announcements by the end of August.

The local subsidiary currently operates an 8.4-hectare hard disk drive manufacturing plant in Laguna. The plant, which employs 8,500 people, produces an average of 1 million units of hard disk drives a month. Roughly 60 percent of these disk drives are designed for PCs.

As a result of a slowdown in PC sales worldwide, Espinosa said the company was also forced to reduce working days from 6 to 4 days as early as May 2001. It has also implemented a "freeze hiring," and has resorted to attrition. The company discontinued the services of at least 300 contractual employees in the last few months, he said.

Asked if there would be further reductions from the present 8,500 employees in the local manufacturing plant, Espinosa declined to comment.

Big names . . .

(From page B12)

ticipation. Alongside them are Internet service providers, computer distributors and media moguls like The Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Metropolitan Computer Times. Also present are Sequtech Corp., On-Line Brands, Datablade Inc., The Brain Co., Gemora Electronics, Chase Technologies, Genmeg Inc., Absolute Practical, P&G Enterprises, M&M Co., Solidways Marketing, Star Value electronics Inc. and Getronics among others.

Live entertainment shall be provided for the duration of the affair. For fun and recreation, there will be network gaming where participants and winners will be awarded valuable prices including scholarships from known IT schools.

For details, you may contact the event manager, Convex International, at 726-86-64 to 65 or 726-41-28 to 30 or e-mail convex@mozcom.com.

CEOs also require technology training

BY JOEY G. ALARILLA

AS more firms aspire to become e-businesses, chief executive officers also have to bridge the "digital divide" in their offices. This means not only providing information technology (IT) training for employees, but CEOs should also realize that they need to know and acquire IT skills and how to use these for business advantage.

"Aside from CEOs, we are looking at the market for entrepreneurs," said Odette Tabobo, marketing manager of PurpleTrain, a business unit under Informatics Holdings Philippines Inc. "We're trying to concentrate on the urban centers in the provinces such as Cebu, Davao and Bacolod, because here in Metro Manila the big companies are already taking care of in-house training."

At the launch of new courses under the Informatics Certified Professional (ICP) program Wednesday, Tabobo pointed out that one of the difficulties companies face nowadays is communication problems between CEOs (and other members of top management) and their chief technology officers and other technical people.

She pointed out that successful use of IT in a company—whether in a dotcom or a brick-and-mortar firm leveraging on the Internet—entails a mix between traditional business and technical knowledge.

Informatics offers e-commerce certification courses online through PurpleTrain. Tabobo stressed the need for continuing education, noting that many CEOs have experiences in traditional firms but have only just made the shift to e-businesses.

She said that PurpleTrain has a number of corporate accounts where the CEOs and employees of a company avail of the online training. Tabobo, however, declined to name these companies.

She also admitted that the big firms in Metro Manila conduct in-house training, wryly adding that some of these companies have their own IT schools.

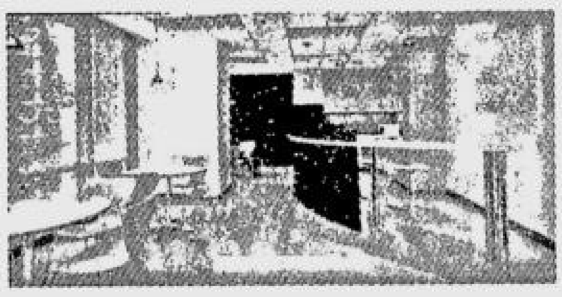
For his part, Leo Riingen, president and CEO of Informatics Holdings Philippines Inc., stressed the need for internationally recognized training for Filipino IT professionals.

He noted the demand for IT professionals in foreign markets such as Singapore, Europe and the United States, citing this as an opportunity for Filipinos. Riingen, however, acknowledged the problem of brain drain, admitting that many local IT professionals who receive further training often end up migrating to other countries.

"The only way we can prevent brain drain is to produce a lot of IT graduates," he said. "There are a lot of IT professionals who are staying here because they choose to. Our goal is to train as many IT professionals as possible, while the role of government is to attract investors," Riingen said.

Office design trends of the information age

Technology continues to change the way people live, so it is inevitable that these innovations transform the workplace as well. A whole new business landscape has emerged where ergonomics, intranets, e-commerce and the like are the buzzwords. Such is the office of the information age where design adapts to the way people work.



With this new e-economy comes a friendlier and more satisfying workplace, along with changes such as coffee bars and casual attire for the predominantly young workforce that constitutes today's I.T. companies.

Flexibility is a key element in office interiors, with designs that support the workflow peculiar to the I.T. environment. With the shift from traditional business models, the set-up of employees' workspaces depends not on titles but on what they actually do.

According to Architect Carlos de Castro, Managing Director of the Manila office of the international design firm Goudie Associates which prepared the sample design fit-outs for Northgate CyberZone's Plaz@ buildings, interiors are more likely to be open plan with a relaxed atmosphere. Gone are the days of numerous enclosed offices of traditional workspaces. In fact, studies done in the US have shown that computer programmers with larger workspaces and less acoustic and visual disruptions performed 2.5 times better that their counterparts in poorly designed work environments.

Companies today also have more flexible organizations, requiring workspaces that are team-oriented, flexible, and contain a variety of different places to work. Mobile technology, moveable and reconfigurable walls and furniture provide environments that can be changed when the need arises. There are wired spaces in every area, thus providing freedom to plug in technology anywhere. The result is a balance between private focused workplaces and highly collaborative, interactive settings requiring open spaces. This is best described as customized work environments adaptable to team and individual work styles while providing vital technological connectivity.

With the advent of the techie workforce that seems to be getting younger and younger, design consultants strive to create work environments that stimulate creativity. Stiff and formal corporate designs have given way to more comfortable and unconventional settings. One current design staple is the inclusion of a centralized coffee station or pantry that also serves as a staff chill-out zone or socialization area.

To accommodate these changes in office technology and interior design, buildings in today's technology parks are designed from the drawing board with the needs of I.T. companies in mind. In Northgate's Plaz@ buildings, the semi-side core design and contiguous wide spaces provide for ease and flexibility in office space planning. Goudie Associates demonstrated how to make efficient use of the building floor plate to achieve higher densities and effective workspace utilization.

The workplace will continue to evolve to meet the demands of companies and employees, as well as the dynamic technology industry. However, design and management experts agree that business, space, technology and the human spirit are inexorably linked – ergo a high-quality environment inspires productivity.

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Storage firm partners with Sun Microsystems

HITACHI Data Systems (HDS), a wholly owned subsidiary of Tokyo-based Hitachi Ltd., and Sun Microsystems announced a global partnership as it aims to become the biggest storage solutions provider in two years.

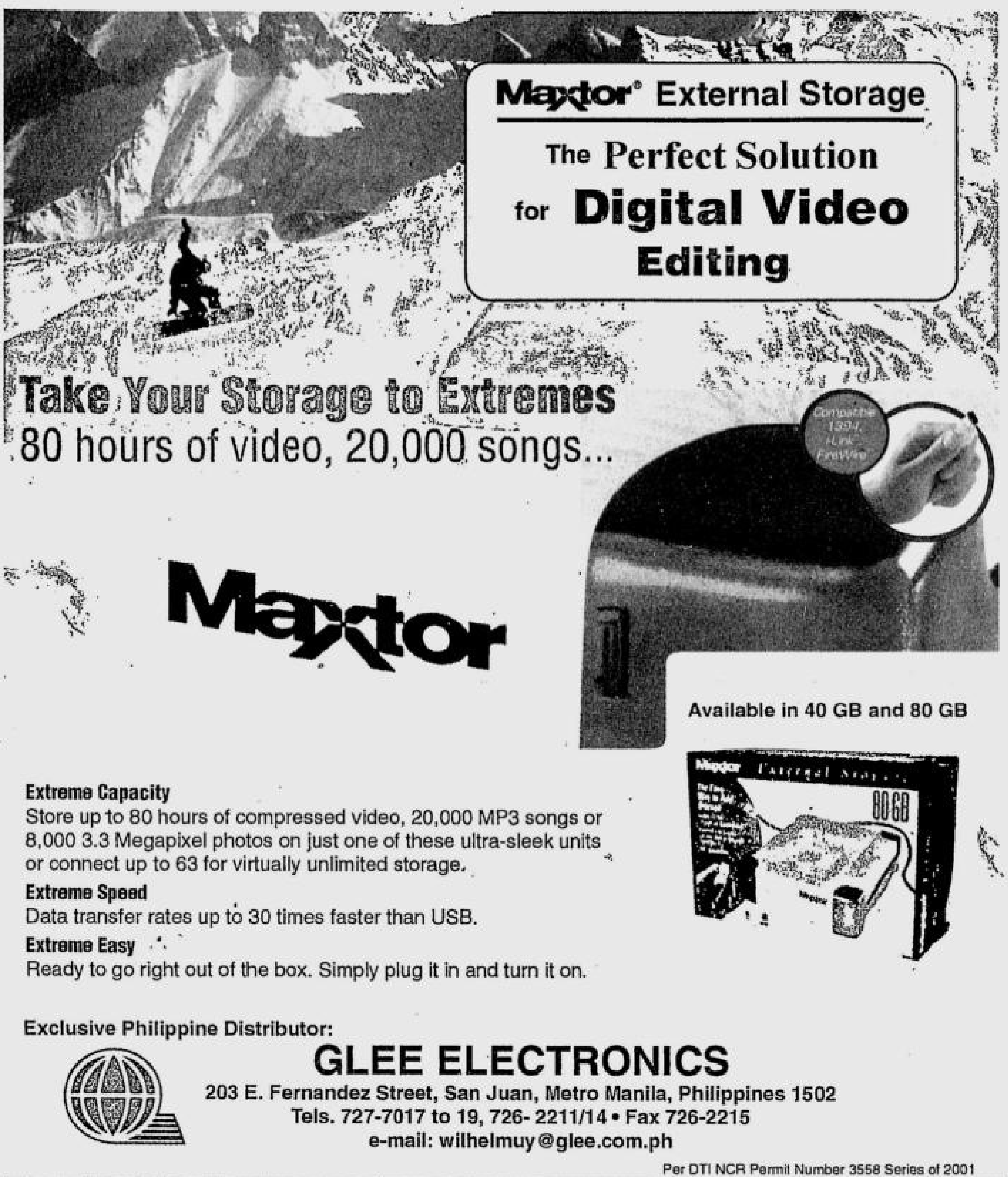
HDS called the agreement a "multi-billion-dollar" partnership, but declined to reveal figures.

Both companies signed a "distributor agreement" that would allow Sun and HDS to cross-license and distribute each other's storage software, as well as codevelop software products. Both companies also expect to invest jointly on global mission-critical support centers.

"I'm confident that we will be No. 1 in two years," Peter Pau, HDS general manager for Greater China and the Philippines, told the INQUIRER, stressing that the partnership would help the company catch up with EMC Corp., the current leader in the storage industry. The alliance would also involve Sun selling the high-end storage systems of HDS.

Meanwhile, HDS confirmed reports that Grant Thomson, country manager for the Philippines, resigned from the company two weeks ago for "personal" reasons. Pau said he is now the interim head of the local operations as he looks for a replacement in a couple of weeks.

"I really don't want to speculate more on his reasons for leaving the company," Pau added. *Erwin G. Oliva*



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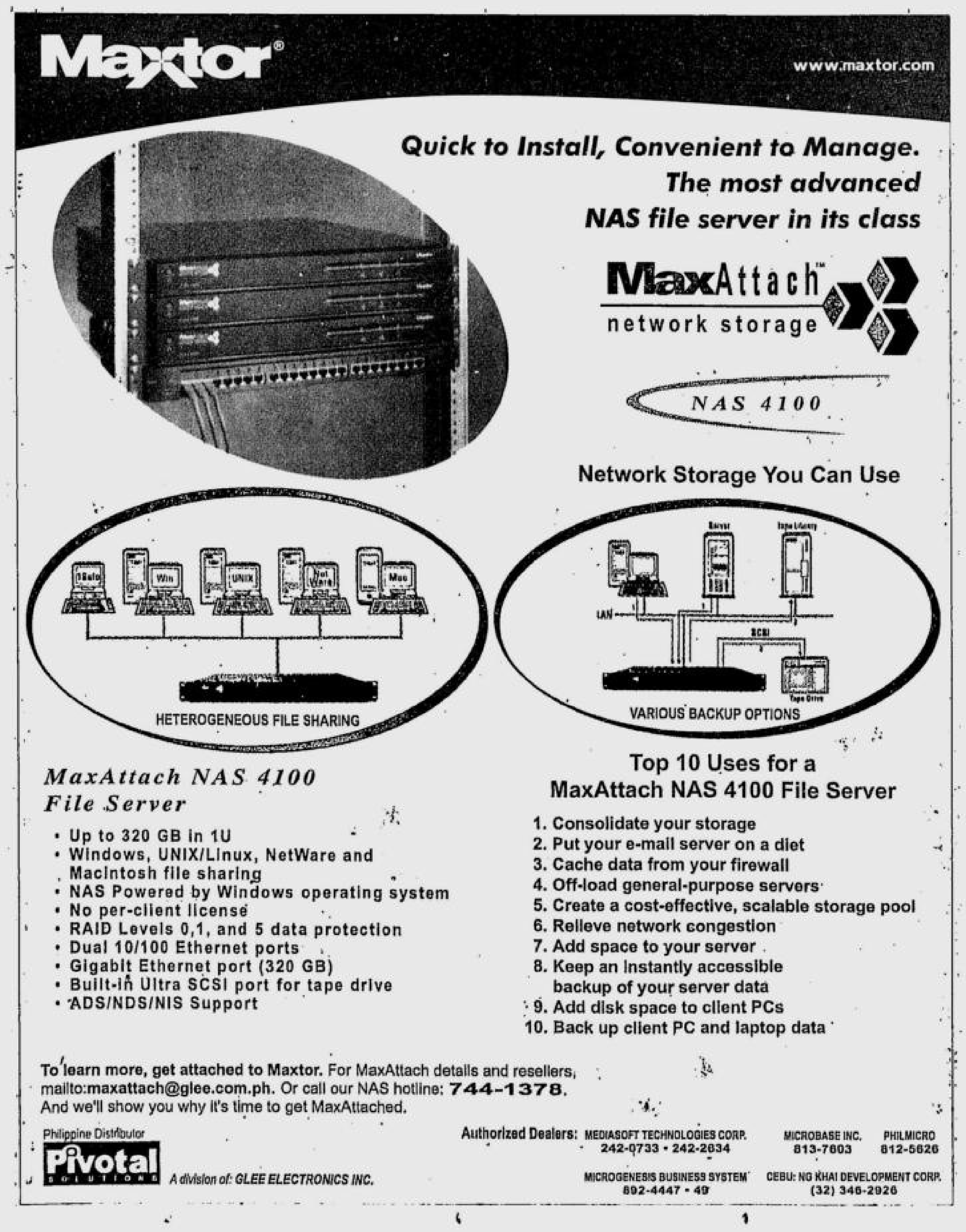

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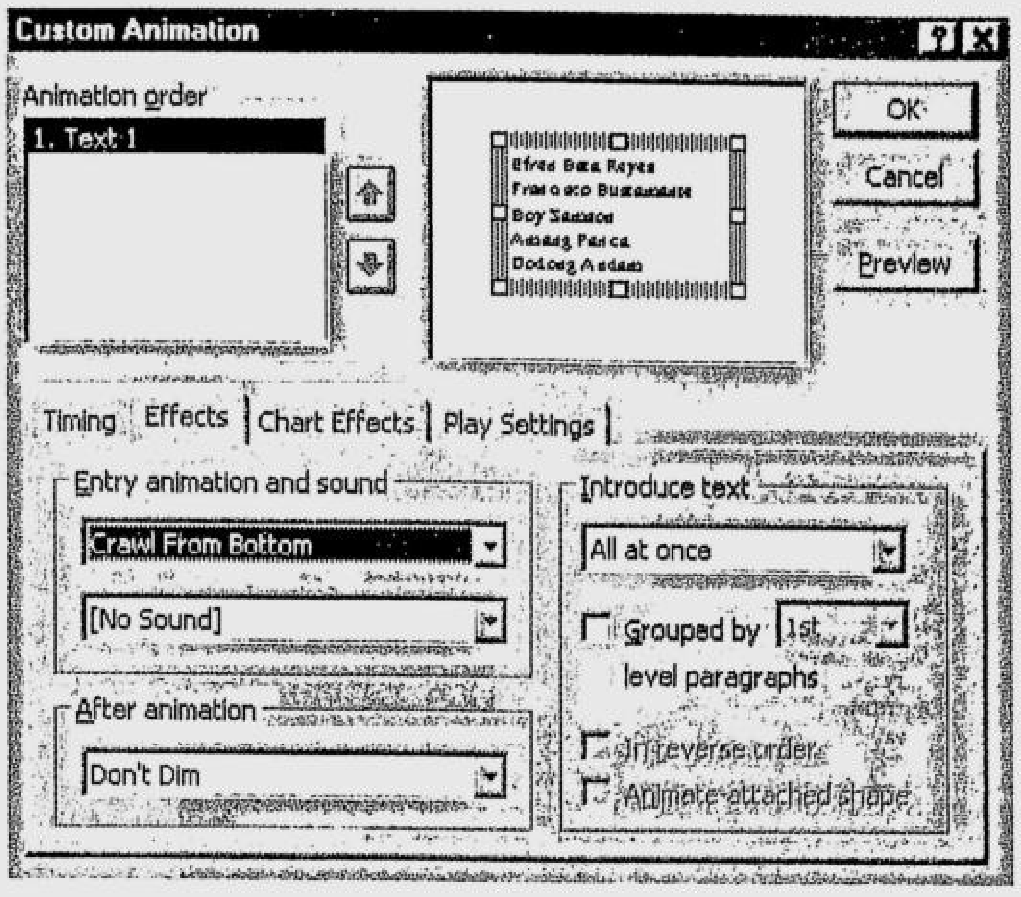

Custom Animation

Animation order: 1. Text 1

Efren Bata Reyes
Francisco Bustamante
Boy Samson
Amang Parica
Dodong Andam

Timing | Effects | Chart Effects | Play Settings

Entry animation and sound: Crawl From Bottom
[No Sound]
After animation: Don't Dim
Introduce text: All at once
☐ Grouped by 1st level paragraphs
☐ In reverse order
☐ Animate attached shape

Creating scrolling credits

POWERTIPS

By Jerry Liao

AFTER YOUR presentation, you may want to list all those who contributed to the project and the creation of the slide presentation at the end of the show. Rather than just listing the names, why not use scrolling credits just like in the movies? Heres how:

(1) Open a blank slide and click the text box button.

(2) Key in the names of the members of your group, pressing "Enter" after each name.

(3) Make sure that the text box is selected.

(4) Select "Slide Show" then "Custom Animation."

(5) Click the "Effects" tab, and then under the "Entry Animation" list box choose "Crawl From Bottom."

(6) Under the list box labeled "Introduce Text," select "All at Once."

(7) Click the "Timing" tab and select the buttons labeled "Animate" and "Automatically."

(8) Click "OK" then choose "Slide Show" then "View Show" from the menu bar.

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Technical panel to help resolve consumer complaints vs DotPH

By Erwin Lemeul G. Oliva

A TECHNICAL panel composed of members of the Department of Science and Technology, the National Computer Center and a private sector representative, will be created to address "technical" issues raised in upcoming "meetings" between .ph registrar DotPH Inc. and individual complainants, Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal of the Bureau of Trade Relations and Consumer Protection (BTRCP) said.

In a closed-door meeting last week, Cristobal also said that officials of DotPH and the individual complainants have agreed on certain "ground rules" for the "amicable and speedy" resolution of the consumer-related issues.

This developed as the Department of Trade and Industry, through the BTRCP, began the "process of mediation" last week.

The BTRCP has been the agency mandated to help resolve consumer complaints lodged against DotPH.

In a separate telephone interview, DotPH corporate communication manager Emil Avanceña said the technical panel will be only consulted about certain technical issues, and will not even be required to attend the meetings regularly.

"They will be just there as a technical resource for the BTRCP," Avanceña added.

During the same meeting last week, Avanceña said the BTRCP has decided to focus on four consumer complaints initially.

There were at least a total of 15 complaints filed by individuals through the Philippine Domain Authority Convenors (PHILDAC) at the BTRCP, he added.

Earlier, DotPH claimed that some of the complaints were "thinly disguised manifestos" concocted by its detractors.

Present during the meeting last week were BTRCP officials, PHILDAC members—including Rudy Villarica, Gerry Kaimo, JR Contreras, Manny Amador—and Avanceña. Joel Disini, the .PH domain name administrator and CEO of DotPH, was reportedly absent.

The meeting last week was meant to discuss the ground rules…We didn't talk about the complaints. However, one of the issues raised was agreeing on who should represent the private sector in the technical panel," Avanceña said. "It will be difficult to agree on who should be in that position."

3Com releases wireless Bluetooth PC card

SANTA CLARA, California—As a step in enabling personal electronic devices to connect effortlessly without cables, 3Com Corp. has announced the worldwide availability of its Bluetooth PC Card, featuring a radically simple 3Com Connection Manager for Bluetooth software package and an innovative antenna design.

The 3Com Wireless Bluetooth PC Card allows mobile users to instantly share information (such as data files, text documents and contact lists) among Bluetooth-enabled personal devices including notebooks, desktop PCs, cell phones and handhelds.

As one of nine promoter companies in the Bluetooth Special Interest Group, 3Com has been a driving force in determining the latest industry standard Bluetooth specifications. 3Com's Wireless Bluetooth PC Card is among the first to market based on the new Bluetooth 1.1 specification. The new specification includes a number of enhancements to the original 1.0 specification, and is intended to ensure compatibility among Bluetooth products regardless of the vendor.

"The simple and ad hoc nature of Bluetooth connections is ideal for personal devices such as mobile phones and PDAs and is also a perfect complement to the inherent structure of a local area network (either wired or wireless) for computing devices like laptops. Bluetooth is an integral component of 3Com's complete communications solutions that enable simple, reliable and secure mobile connectivity," said Rick Maule, vice president and general manager of 3Com's Mobile Connectivity Division. "3Com's Bluetooth products demonstrate our solid heritage in serving the connectivity needs of the mobile worker, and with our distribution channels, we will be a powerful force in placing standards-based Bluetooth products in the hands of consumer, road warrior and enterprise customers."

3Com's wireless Bluetooth products enable users to conveniently connect without cables, share files among personal devices, establish a quick dial-up Internet connection via a Bluetooth-enabled cell phone or print to a Bluetooth-enabled printer without logging on to the local network. With this new technology, exchanging files in a conference room or checking e-mail on the road can be accomplished without cables, in a matter of seconds.

In April 2001, Cahners In-Stat Group estimated that shipments of Bluetooth-enabled products will soar to 955 million units by 2005.

"For Bluetooth to successfully live up to its potential of universal adoption, it must be easy to install and manage. We are encouraged that 3Com's products are simple to use. The future is bright for this emerging technology with enormous potential, and 3Com is on the leading edge of what is sure to be the future of personal wireless networking," said Joyce Putscher with Cahners In-Stat.

Building on its rich history of innovations in mobile connectivity, the 3Com Connection Manager for Bluetooth software ships with each PC Card and provides radically simple connectivity for the mobile worker:

- Exchanging files or printing is a simple, one-step, drag-and-drop process.
- Recognizing other Bluetooth devices requires no user interaction. Discovery is done automatically by the 3Com Connection Manager for Bluetooth software.
- Multiple security options allow users to control access to their device.
- A fully discoverable setting enables other Bluetooth devices to recognize and transact with the Bluetooth device.
- A medium level of security enables other Bluetooth devices to recognize the Bluetooth device, but requires a password to communicate.
- The highest level of security cloaks the Bluetooth device from other devices, and transactions are only possible with a password from authorized devices.
- The 3Com Connection Manager for Bluetooth software and firmware are flash upgradeable, providing a future-proof upgrade path as additional profiles are added to the Bluetooth specification, protecting customers' investment in this new technology.

Maynilad moves closer to ₱4 rates increase

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT is willing to amend its concession agreement with Maynilad Water Services Inc., removing a major obstacle to the Lopez-owned firm's bid for a minimum P4-per-cubic-meter increase, according to Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas.

Canlas said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System would discuss with Maynilad how provisions of their concession agreement could be changed to accommodate a memorandum that allowed Maynilad to raise its rates next month.

"They would have to discuss these amendments among themselves. It would have to be the call of Secretary (Simeon) Datumanong of the Department of Public Works and Highways. The rest of the Cabinet members will be hands-off on this issue," Canlas said.

The MWSS-Regulatory Office earlier issued a ruling that would have stalled Maynilad's bid to raise its rates by P4.75 per cubic meter next month.

Ranking officials said earlier the MWSS-Regulatory Office ruled that the provisions of the memorandum of cooperation between the MWSS and Maynilad introduced amendments to the concession agreement between them.

The memorandum, signed by MWSS Administrator Jose Mabanta and Maynilad president Rafael Alunan III in June, allowed Maynilad to raise its rates by P4.75 per cubic meter next month.

Malacañang, however, last month ordered the MWSS to recall and review the memorandum.

The MWSS allowed Maynilad to raise its rates to allow the Lopez-owned company to recover P2.7 billion worth of foreign exchange-related losses.

Maynilad has reported that because of the peso's steep depreciation against the dollar, the debts it absorbed from the MWSS have grown substantially, jeopardizing its operations.

An official of the MWSS-Regulatory Office said that since the memorandum clearing Maynilad's rates increase amended the original MWSS-Maynilad concession agreement, it would have to be approved by the Department of Finance, the MWSS board of trustees and Manila Water Co. Inc.

BSP demands more info from banks

TO ATTRACT more foreign players, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to require banks to disclose more information, including details about their owners, and their past-due Dosri exposure.

"The central bank is committed to increasing foreign participation in the local banking sector. As such, we will soon introduce reforms to prepare domestic banks to complete globally," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in a speech before the Singaporean business community on Friday.

Buenaventura said there was a need to make the country's banking system more transparent, enhance the BSP's regulatory powers and stimulate a consumer-oriented credit environment.

"We will require the quarterly publication of statements of conditions, key financial indicators, non-performing loans and related-party lending," he said.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the central bank was reviewing its disclosure requirements to see whether it should issue new rules.

Among the information that the central bank may ask from banks are details of past-due loans extended to their directors, officers, shareholders and related interests, and details about their ownership structures, contingent accounts, and foreclosed assets or real and other properties owned or acquired (Ropoa).

Reyes said the BSP wanted to know how much Ropoa banks had been carrying in their books for more than five years and how much was below five years.

A Ropoa profile was important to see whether banks should put in more loan-loss reserves, he explained.

"Foreign analysts had been complaining that they need more data about local banks. More information is needed to make the industry more attractive to foreign players," Reyes said.

Bangko Sentral limits derivatives trading

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to issue a circular that will limit the trading and issuance of complex derivative instruments to commercial and universal banks.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said thrift banks and non-bank financial groups could only apply for a regular derivative license to pursue transactions of foreign exchange forwards and swaps with a maturity of less than a year.

The new guidelines would be released by the central bank in the next two weeks, Reyes said.

"Only commercial and universal banks can now apply for an expanded derivatives license. Prior to this circular, even thrift banks can seek a similar license," he said.

An expanded derivatives license will allow a big bank to buy, trade and issue more sophisticated tools like the dollar-linked facility that the Department of Finance has asked three investment banks to handle.

The dollar-linked instruments are two- and three-year debts that will give investors a chance to hedge against the peso's weakness and, at the same time, help finance a gaping budget deficit.

The debt papers to be issued soon by RCBC Capital, Multinational Investment Bancorporation and Deutsche Bank will offer dollar-linked interest rates at current levels and will be paid out based on the peso-dollar exchange rate by the time of maturity.

Reyes said interest-rates derivative products, as well as options, were also considered complex.

The central bank official said the new policy was in line with the central bank's efforts to implement more prudential measures that would help maintain the banking industry's financial health.

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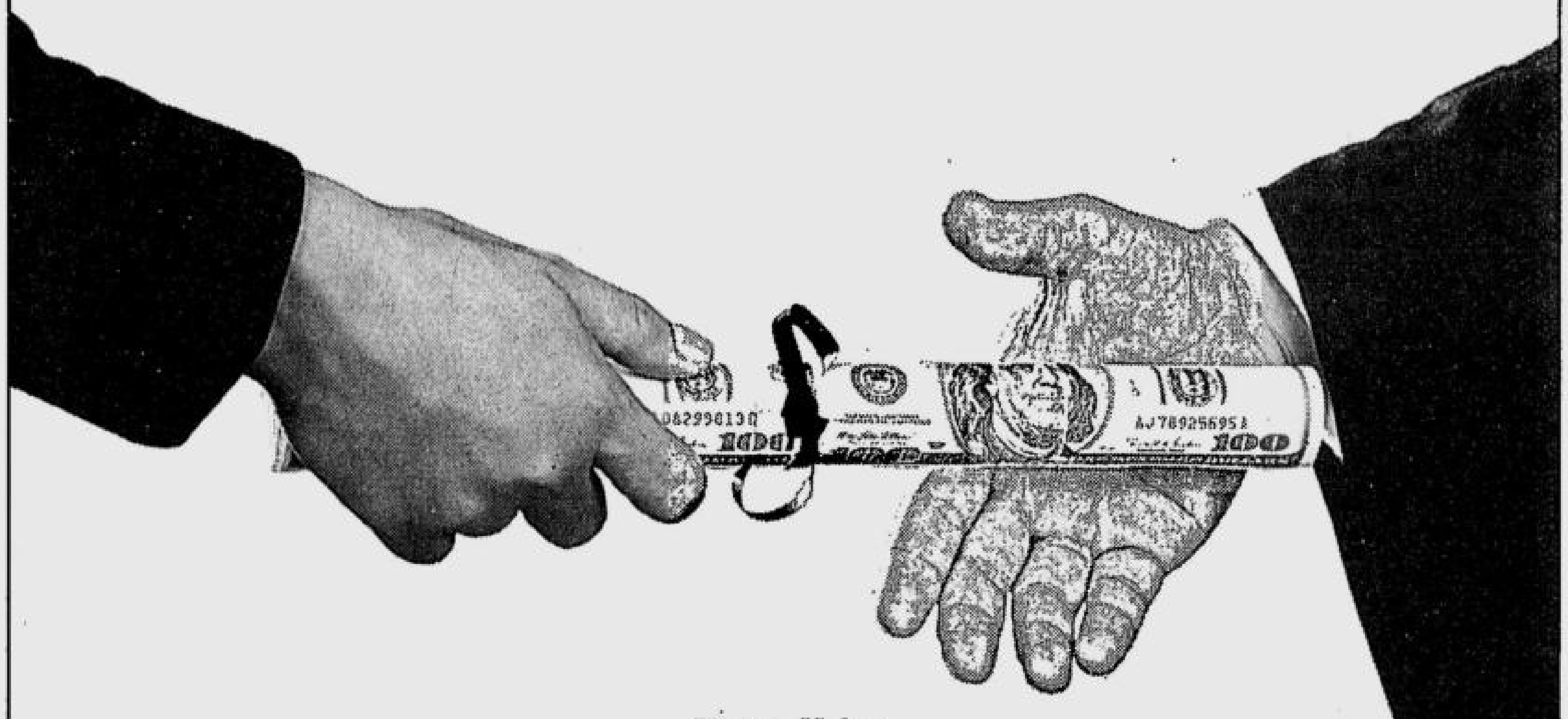

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BUSINESS

BIGGER AND BETTER

North Harbor to get ₱2.5-B facelift

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER years of delay, the country's premier domestic port will finally be given a P2.5-billion facelift.

"It (P2.5 billion) could be more, depending on the requirements of the shipping lines," Philippine Ports Authority general manager Alfonso Cusi said in an interview last week.

The project involves the merging of piers, construction of a new quay and a passenger terminal building, and reinforcement and repair works for the proposed three phases starting at the Marine Slipway going south toward Pier 2.

"We're designing the port in such a way that the shipping lines' needs (would be met)," he said.

The plan was conceptualized on the basis of traffic, including containers and general cargo, expected to be handled at the North Harbor up to 2013.

Port access and road network programs leading to the North Harbor by the Department of Public Works and Highways will also be taken into consideration.

To fund the project, the PPA is encouraging private sector participation through the build-operate-transfer scheme.

"We are exploring various options to encourage greater participation of private groups in port operation, particularly in the development of the North Harbor," Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said in a speech before the Makati Business Club last week.

In case there will be no takers, the PPA will do a bond flotation to raise the money to see the project through.

"It's an option in case the BOT fails. We'll do the flotation right away to avoid any delays in the project, but I'm optimistic that there will be takers," Cusi said.

He added that the PPA would wait up to December for any parties interested to enter into a BOT agreement with the government.

Various stakeholders, including the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the Domestic Shipping Association, earlier expressed opposition to the terms of the project.

They claimed that the original version of the modernization plan would result in a port monopoly.

These same groups, however, have already agreed to the terms of the project.

"DSA agreed on the modernization concept. PCCI expressed agreement as well," Cusi said.

The first phase of the project is expected to be finished by 2004, while the rest is scheduled to be operational by 2005.

Court upholds gov't campaign vs fixers

THE COURT of Appeals has dismissed an insurer's move to block a program initiated by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to crack down on fake insurance policies, predatory fixing and rampant fixing of licenses and franchises.

In an Aug. 21 ruling, the high court dismissed a petition by Eastern Assurance and Surety Corp. to nullify LTFRB memorandum circular 2001-001.

The memorandum, issued on Feb. 1, directed the creation of the "two-group system" and "blacklisting scheme" on the LTFRB's passenger accident insurance coverage for public-utility vehicle operators.

The passenger accident insurance coverage fixes a P50,000 per passenger insurance coverage in cases of accidents.

The memorandum was issued after the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines, Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide and the Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organizations-Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators urged the LTFRB to create the "two-group system" and "blacklisting scheme."

This is in light of the growing cases of fake insurance policies and predatory pricing among competing insurance companies and fixers in the LTFRB.

The "two-group system" gives only two groups of insurance firms the right to offer personal accident insurance policies in the LTFRB. These are the Philippine Accident Managers Inc. and Passenger Accident Insurance Consortium II.

Eastern Assurance, the company that sought to block the two-group system and blacklisting scheme, said the LTFB memorandum was "illegal as it is discriminatory, confiscatory and monopolistic, and it violates the authority granted by the Insurance Commission to Eastern Assurance."

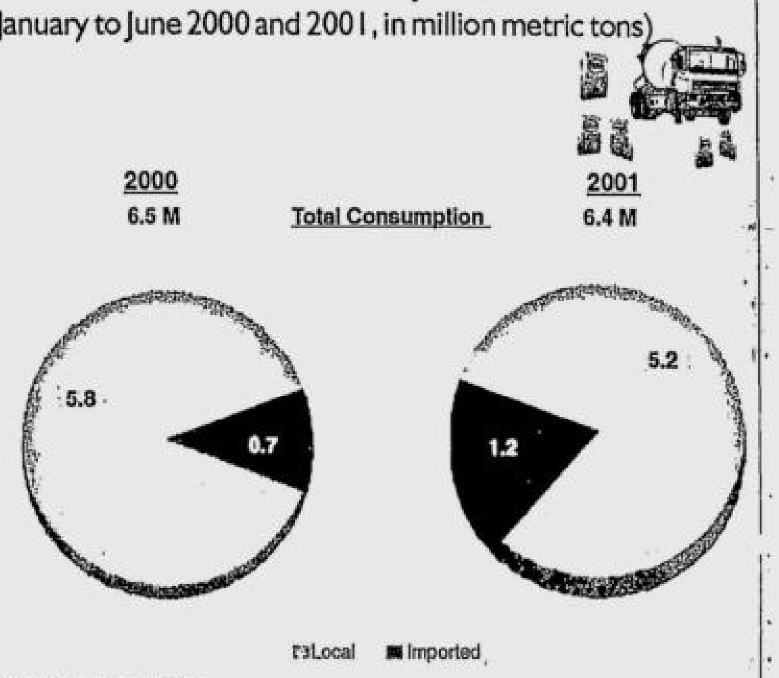
Abigail L. Ho

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Domestic cement consumption

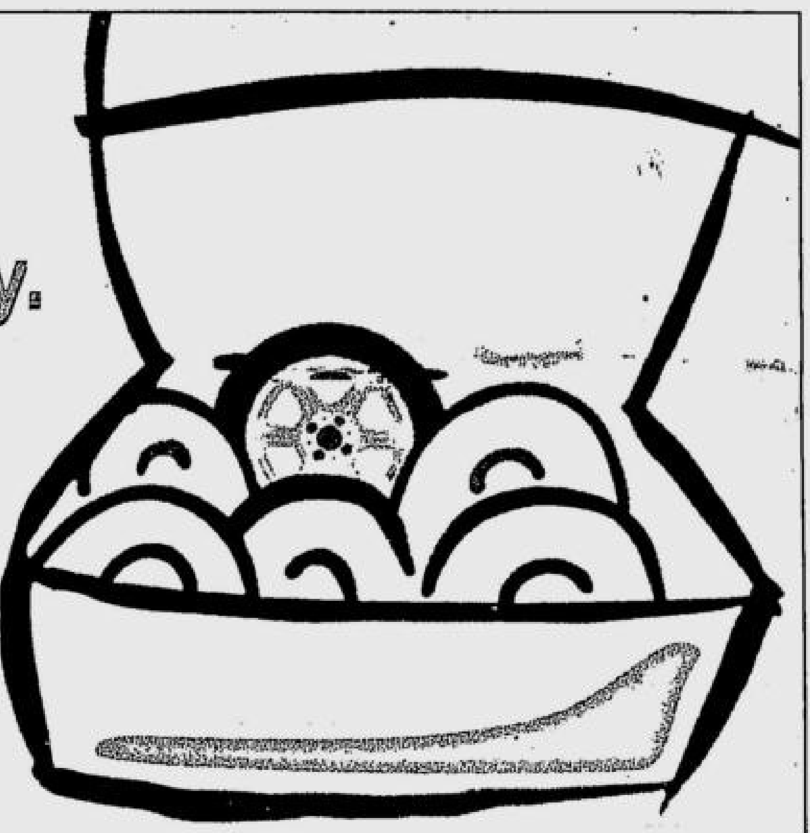
(January to June 2000 and 2001, in million metric tons)



Source: Cement companies

TOTAL cement consumption for the first half of the year was 6.4 million metric tons, 1.2-percent less compared with that of the same period last year. But jumping 512 percent was imported cement at 1.2 million metric tons. Last year there were only 0.7 million metric tons of imported cement.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research



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High-profile actress goes for low-risk investments

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

MEGASTAR Sharon Cuneta is one of a handful of successful tinsel town personalities who have mastered the elusive art of managing finances well.

At an early age, she learned the value of hard work and the ability to make money grow. And she put these lessons into good use.

She now has enough money saved up to see her and her family through the proverbial rainy days and even finance her childhood dream—set up a boutique hotel with a coffee shop where she can do the baking herself.

(But she says she does not yet have the time to pursue this dream.)

Business acumen

Most people know that her business acumen comes from her father, Pablo Cuneta, the longest serving mayor in the country, who headed Pasay City's Municipal Hall for some 40 years.

But she credits her mother, Elaine, for instilling in her the value of saving for the rainy days.

In a rare interview about how she manages her finances, the multi-awarded actress reveals that when she was about seven years old, she asked her mom what she does in a bank.

Elaine patiently explained to her that she kept her money in the bank. She used the example of

HIGH/ C2

MULTI-AWARDED singer/actress Sharon Cuneta describes herself as a conservative investor.

DE ROSSI believes in keeping morale high.

Build good relations with staff and clients, and money will come

By Michelle V. Remo

MANAGEMENT STYLES

WHILE keeping a distance from their employees is how some executives get the respect of their subordinates, this Italian boss does the opposite.

Armando de Rossi, regional director for Asia of C.M.C. di Ravenna, an Italian construction firm, believes that knowing how to relate to people from all walks of life is a must in any business.

He says this is the key to the steady growth of C.M.C. di Ravenna, which depends on government contracts for infrastructure projects like dams, tunnels, roads and bridges.

He explains that being a friend to different government administrations has kept the contracts for the company increasing. That is why despite some low points in the country's economy, he adds, the company's net worth increases by the year.

Another less tangible, but no less valuable factor behind di Ravenna's success, is de Rossi's relationship with Filipinos.

He has been here since 1976 and has visited more places than most Filipinos. He has been to over 50 provinces and has learned to love and be loved by Filipinos, especially by the people in the countryside. He has even applied for Filipino citizenship.

Man from Venice

De Rossi was raised in a simple family in Venice, Italy, and he recalls that he has always related well with people ever since childhood.

He is now applying this rapport with people when he deals with the engineers in his firms and even his clients.

Being at the helm of the company's regional office, he has to make sure that the works at a project site are running smoothly. He also has to acquire projects for the company, find the best engineers and attend to the needs of the clients.

Carrying a heavy load on his shoulders doesn't hinder De Rossi from keeping in touch with the employees.

"I keep my door open to anyone who wants to see me first come first served and without the need for appointments," says De Rossi when asked about his style of dealing with his staff.

He believes that personally seeing to the concerns of the employees goes a long way in keeping the morale at the company high.

With this people-friendly executive at the helm, C.M.C. di Ravenna has become one of the leading construction companies in the region, with operations that include infrastructure works, hydraulic engineering, rural development projects and marine works.

C.M.C. di Ravenna has offices in four continents and in 11 countries such as Malaysia, Taiwan, Africa and the Philippines.

Hands-on boss

De Rossi also describes himself as a hands-on boss. His daily itinerary includes project site visits.

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RP must have anti-money laundering law

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Renato C. Valencia

MONEY laundering has, once more, taken center stage, with Isafp chief Victor Corpus' recent allegation that Sen. Panfilo Lacson, together with former President Joseph Estrada and former first lady Loi Ejercito, laundered some $1 billion in Hong Kong, the United States and Canada from drug trafficking, kidnapping, smuggling and other criminal activities.

Last June, the Philippines was named among 17 non-cooperative countries and territories (NCCTs) in the world by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an independent international body with 29 member countries, mostly OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries.

Last July, in her State of the Nation Address, President Macapagal-Arroyo asked Congress to amend the BSP charter and the banking act to take the Philippines out of the money-laundering list.

So why so much fuss about money laundering? I can think of three good reasons:

1. The Philippines has very strict bank deposit secrecy laws making the country a haven for criminal activities.

2. Money laundering has heavy economic costs.

3. Worse, it has serious social costs.

Strict secrecy laws

There are only four instances under Philippine laws when peso deposits may be looked into, namely: upon written permission of the depositor; in case of impeachment; on court order in cases of bribery or dereliction of duty; and when the deposit is subject matter of litigation.

The FCDU Law is even stricter: foreign currency deposits may be looked into only with the written permission of the depositor.

With these very strict bank deposit secrecy laws, the Philippines becomes an ideal ground for criminal activities. Proceeds from drug trafficking, kidnapping, smuggling, bank robberies, and other criminal activities could easily be deposited in Philippine banks and then layered, or converted to other financial instruments, without fear of the original deposit being disclosed or looked into.

Once laundered, money can then be re-cycled to finance the same nefarious activities, this time with a larger capital. Money laundering, therefore, can grow the criminal businesses and enable criminal syndicates to flourish in any country where there is no law prohibiting it.

Economic costs

Because money laundering enables criminal activities to flourish, more resources would be needed to combat crimes: more cops and security guards, more equipment, more intelligence funds, higher insurance costs, etc.

The immediate net effect is higher cost of doing business in the Philippines. Stated another way, it means lower profits for business or higher costs of goods and services to the customers.

The longer net effect in a scenario of flourishing crimes is zero investments, zero jobs and a downward spiral for the economy as poor economic performance and crimes feed on each other.

Social costs

Again, in a scenario of flourishing crimes brought about by money laundering, one can see the gradual breakdown of institutions, including the family.

Members of families confronted by drug or kidnapping problems end up being either very close to, or estranged from each other. But how can family members protect each other if prohibited drugs are readily available at affordable prices? If kidnappers freely roam the country? Or, if criminals are protected by powerful warlords?

People generally lose hope and trust in institutions, public or private, which are unable to provide them personal security and protection from crimes, or justice when they are victimized. This leads to a general weakening of the system, making the government vulnerable to a peaceful or worse, violent revolution.

A more dreadful scenario is narco-politics or narco-state. Citizens lose their recourse to the government for personal security or justice. Those who oppose the system become targets of assassination. Fear, rather then peace, reigns. God help us if we reach this stage.

Comprehensive law

To effectively combat crime and money laundering, we need a comprehensive money laundering law.

First, it must focus on major crimes such as drugs, kidnapping, smuggling, corruption and others that require international settlements. We must forget about petty crimes. Second, it must cover not only banks, but also other business enterprises.

Third, all transactions amounting to P500,000 or lower should be open to disclosure or examination. Fourth, sanctions must be stiff. Lastly, all direct and indirect offenses relating to money laundering should be dealt with severely.

Political will

The passage of an anti-money laundering bill into a law will surely be a test of this administration's political will.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author who is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines and vice chair of Asia Pacific Network Holdings Inc. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph)

High profile actress goes for low-risk investments

(From page C1)

a piggy bank, telling the young Sharon that if she placed P5 inside a coin bank, the money would still be P5 after a year.

But if she placed the money in a bank, the same P5 can become P10 in just a few years.

And so the concept of making money grow was instilled in the young actress. In fact, she opened her very own bank account with P20 with the help of her mother's secretary a few days after her talk with her mom. She did not touch the money for a year.

Her father, on the other hand, subtly planted in her young mind the importance of investing money well.

Sharon recalls that her father would always tell her and brother Chet about his various ventures, most of which involved real estate.

"Dad built his fortune on real estate," recalls the actress. "He would buy land, build on it and sell."

She says her father told them that land is a good investment because "*ang lupa hindi mawawala.*"

While her dad was busy scouting for good real estate projects, her mom dabbled in entrepreneurship. She had *modistas* and set up a store selling shoes and bags made from water lily.

With such an early exposure to business, it comes as no surprise then that Sharon nurtured an ambition "to be a business person of some sort."

Starting young

She started fulfilling that ambition when she was just 10 years old. She would put together several sheets of bond paper, fold them in half, decorate the first page and sell these for P0.25 to P0.50 each.

When the "in" thing was plastic bags sewn together and decorated with straw, she was also into it. She also sold cookies to relatives as soon as she learned how to bake.

"I sold to relatives because I knew they would not say no," she smiles in recollection."

But the last thing she probably expected was that a day would come when just being Sharon Cuneta would mean big business.

At only 12, she struck a gold mine when she sang "Mr. DJ," a song composed by her uncle, (now senator) Tito Sotto that became one of the biggest hits of the late '70s.

It was a string of hits from then on, providing her a good source of income. She earned well enough that she never asked for allowance from her parents.

She even paid for her own tuition during her sophomore year at the International School, which at that time amounted to P200,000.

From her extra money, Sharon says she would buy jewelry for investment.

Her investments grew as Sharon's career continued to skyrocket, with no signs of stopping even after two decades in the competitive business.

She is one of the highest paid actresses today and is also probably one of the highest paid product endorsers.

Companies like McDonald's, WG & A, Alaska, are willing to pay her millions of pesos just to get her to endorse their products.

Turning to land

From jewelry, she ended up making her biggest investments in real estate, her father's favorite investment vehicle. She admits though that her first real estate investment was a bad one in the sense that the property remains undeveloped to this day.

But she says she does not allow these things to get her down for long.

The thirty-something actress/singer candidly says that she became more serious about investing after her separation from her former husband Gabby Concepcion.

When she and the actor split up she rented a place at the Twin Towers along Ayala Ave. in Makati City and lived there with daughter KC. Her funds, she relates, were so limited at that time that she could not furnish her unit for eight long months.

Sharon, however, always had her work to rely on. Thanks to her hit movies, she was able to earn enough to buy all the furnishings she wanted.

She was also able to buy a piece of property in an area that has become one of the most expensive addresses in the country, and at the same time operate Krista, her clothes shop that popularized linen clothes.

(She closed the shop after 11 years because of intense competition from importers).

Sharon, however, returned to clothes retailing with her recent acquisition of a franchise of Sari-Sari, the clothes and shoe shop of her long time friend, Marni Ocampo. She opened her shop at the EDSA Shangri-la Mall.

She says she likes a getting a franchise because the system is already there and the training is provided for by the franchisor, so there are less headaches.

Sharon also invests in art pieces like works of renowned artist Malang, antiques from Europe and jewelry "because I have daughters."

Sharon describes herself as a conservative investor who prefers to put her money in low-risk investments rather than high-risk, high return ventures. She never puts her money in one basket.

She relies mostly on her own advice and that of her husband, Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

"I really prefer investing in stuff that will make my money work for me," she states.

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Anatomy of Pinoy management style

BY MICHAEL M. ALUNAN

ONE of the many factors that could determine success in Pinoy politics or business is understanding the basic anatomy of managing Pinoys.

To our political leaders, led by Ate Gloria, and to foreign and local businessmen who want to do good, here are some pointers that are worth considering.

Pardon the puns but ORGANically (talking about organs), one simply needs to put all of one's vital "organs" on the job. While all senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste) should also be on the alert, what are more essential are to put one's mind, one's heart, one's hands and one's feet on the job. Last but not the least are your balls, which make one decisive, strong and courageous. For a healthy body or a healthy business or a political organization, you need a healthy balance of all the organs functioning according to their defined roles and in sync with each other.

(1) Hands-on learning and hands-on management

While we can also learn from books and theories, there is no substitute to learning hands on. Experience is the best form of education as an old adage goes. Traditional concept of work is really soiling one's hands. However, hands-on—on experience is also nothing unless it is raised to theory in the mind. In short, you also have to use your head.

(2) Working smarter with the mind

With the advances in science and technology, there has been a paradigm shift in importance from brawn power to brain power. From working harder to working smarter. We must not complicate work, but simplify work for effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is more important as one system or method may be more cost-efficient, but if not effective, the entire thing becomes a waste of money just the same.

(3) Have the heart

Modern day business can no longer survive without involving people and consumers themselves as stakeholders of development. Consumers are now increasingly aware of their rights and responsibilities. Thus, businesses are now including them, their concerns and their fast changing tastes, preferences and behavior into their production and marketing plans. The same goes for politics. We must learn from the Edsa III. You need to have the heart first to be able to understand the feelings of the "*masa*."

Given this trend, modern-day management therefore is heading toward the ironic but ideal situation whereby the flow of information, ideas and even the influence on policy-making and decision-making will become more democratic than monolithic, more deregulated than regulated, more decentralized than centralized, more market-oriented than state-controlled, more entrepreneurial than bureaucratic and more team-building than turf-building, (although ironically, more independent than dependent on each other.)

Structure-wise, this means an inversion of the traditional flow of command and information. Before it was the boss at the top, managers at the middle, employees at the rank-and-file and the consumers at the bottom. Increasingly today, however, with globalization, consumerism, and a market politics, the consumers and the community at large are now at the top of an inverted pyramid. Under them are the employees, managers and the bosses.

Thus, the paradox of the ideal form of leadership is a situation whereby when people finally learn how to lead the way, it would be easier for our leaders to follow them.

Unfortunately, this is not a one-way street as the dialectics of change and leadership now demand full dedication of the heart to motivate people to lead the way in their particular tasks and responsibilities.

To appreciate the importance of people business, networking and strategic alliances (all modern trends in business now), what is necessary is for people to have also the heart to listen to people's problems, issues and concerns. With the stiffer competition, survival in business or in politics requires one to be flexible. This requires listening with the heart.

(4) Other supporting organs (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and hands.)

Supporting the deeper discernment of the heart are other vital organs that make up the five basic senses. Although these senses cater mainly to perceptual or surface learning as opposed to conceptual or deeper learning, they are very vital, nonetheless, as they capture the manifestations of any fundamental change slowly evolving in everything. To gather data, facts and trends that are vital in decision-making, you need these basic senses.

You need the sense of sight to spot the difference and to scan new horizons. You need the nose to smell a rat, smell something fishy, or smell an opportunity. You also need the nose news, more so now with mass media influencing so much our lives. You also need ears not only to hear but to listen to problems and concerns. It is also important to feel and touch to experience the real thing as they say. Another old adage also says the "proof of the pudding is in eating, thus the importance of taste."

All these senses are important in discerning the ever changing behavior, habits and patterns of the consumer or one's political constituency. Being flexible therefore does not really mean being indecisive or fickle-minded. As a matter of fact, this indicates one is decisive and daring enough to make bold but meaningful reforms even to the adverse reactions of reactionaries or traditionalists.

(5) Use your feet to get moving, but simply walk don't run.

Feet are also vital organs. They symbolize movement not stagnation. They keep you moving. Even in Filipino, actions of the feet have manifold symbolic and functional meanings. When you want to fix something or apply for something in any office, you say, "*Lalakarin ko* (walk or work it out)." When your papers are moving, they say, "*Lumalakad na* (they are now walking)." When you have an appointment, you have a "*Lakad* (e-walk)."

But please avoid running unless your exercising or being chased. "Haste makes waste" as one old adage goes. Figuratively, running in Filipino has negative connotations, i.e., "*Tinakbuhan ka* (Someone run off with your money)."

As one Higaonon tribal elder once told me in his language in what appears to be a brilliant gem of wisdom, "*Kung nagmamadali ka, magdahan-dahan ka*" (Tagalog translation) which means "If you are in a hurry, slow down."

(6) Use your kidneys between your ears. If you don't know what I mean, you must not be using them. In short, use your Pinoy humor. They help you survive and understand the tricky oral and sign languages of the Pinoy.

(7) Balls are another vital organ. This helps you take risks and make bold decisions. Beyond that, I leave it up to your imagination as that is already below the belt.

Build good . . .

(From page C1)

"As soon as I wake up around 6 in the morning, I read the day's papers and then I would go to the project sites, after which I attend to regular meetings with company supervisors or clients," says De Rossi.

But his hands-on style doesn't keep De Rossi from delegating important tasks to his staff. One value that the Italian boss adheres to is "making the employees feel that they are trusted."

He says that keeping the people's sense of self worth will make them stick to the company, and entrusting them with essential responsibilities is the best way to make it happen.

"Making them feel trusted does not only inject confidence, but also inculcates a sense of responsibility in them," he says.

"When I assign to them a task, I ask them when I can expect it done. So when I see some of them playing idly lazy in the middle of a work, I don't reprimand them, but I tell them, 'You told me it will be done Friday so I expect it done by then," adds De Rossi.

Having that warm character, it is no surprise that De Rossi has expanded his circle of friends to include a lot of Filipinos. He has also taken an interest in helping alleviate the plight of the less privileged, especially in the depressed areas.

Adopted son

This could be how De Rossi was adopted as a "native son of Laguna" in 1990, when he spearheaded significant projects in the town when he was president of the Rotary Club of Pagsanjan from 1980-1981.

He worked to contribute to the livelihood of the people there. And Laguna is just one of the many towns where he has left significant contributions.

De Rossi extends this missionary attitude to the company that he heads.

He says that C.M.C. di Ravenna is a cooperative company, meaning its employees enjoy benefits and company rules that some corporations do not have, making them enjoy life as much as their bosses do.

"Again, the bottom line is an amicable and just human relations with his employees and clients," he says.

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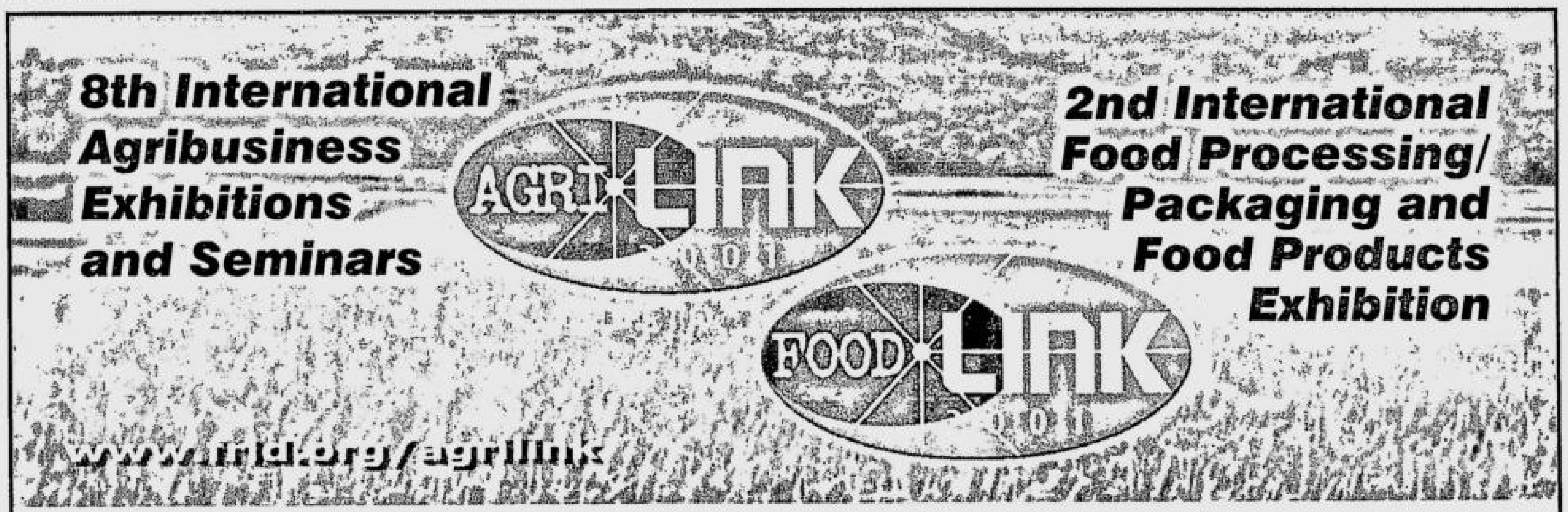
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Exec takes slow walk to success on Edsamail

ABRAHAM Lincoln once said: "I am a slow walker but I never walk backward.'' This credo could very well apply to today's breed of individuals who choose to walk toward success slowly but surely.

But could this still be viable at a time when everybody moves at breakneck speed? Not so for the young but seasoned marketing whiz, Rafael Ramon "Ramy" Hocson, who at 29 is the vice president for regional sales and marketing of Edsamail Holdings Pte Ltd. the Internet company behind the very popular free e-mail service, Edsamail.

Though he never was the type who ran his career like a horserace, Ramy's credentials equal those of a heavyweight.

Shortly after graduating with a BS degree in Management Engineering at the Ateneo, he plunged head first into the marketing industry as assistant brand manager in a top multinational company. A promotion to brand manager and increased market share conquests later, he found himself working for a large beverage company where his job managing brands at regional-level gave him the opportunity to be posted in Indonesia and Hong Kong, as well as traveling across Asia and the Americas.

"I highly recommend working in another country to anybody. It widens your perspective because it teaches you a lot about yourself and makes you appreciate your country better," he says

Not one to settle in a comfort zone and resist further challenge, Ramy decided to go back to the Philippines as general manager for a transnational marketing promotions company. He set up and launched its operations effectively, closing long-term deals with manufacturers, retailers and suppliers.

Not long after, he ventured into the challenging Internet industry.

"My current undertaking is to oversee the marketing planning, development and implementation for all Edsamail products and services in all Edsamail markets in the Philippines and Singapore," he says.

Such a task isn't exactly a walk in the park but then again, this is what Ramy thrives on.

"The Internet industry is one hectic place. Changes happen very fast, which is why constant adjustment and quick fine tuning of strategies is what you have to master. There's no industry like it," he relates

So far, Ramy and his team are proud of having generated over 550,000 Edsamail subscribers in the Philippines, putting them at the top spot among Internet service providers in the country and 70,000 subscribers in Singapore which makes them the 3rd largest in the high-tech city-state. "We are prouder of the fact that we set the pace in using the Internet for marketing and business-building here in the region, and are doing very well despite the difficulties of other Internet companies," he says.

Achievements, whether big or small, are always made from an interplay between success and failure.

"In my experience, the elements that make success are simple good values, having a vision and pursuing it, determination and teamwork. Failure is necessary. When a mistake happens, you evaluate what went wrong and learn from it so that it doesn't happen again. Failure is just an aspect of one's future success. It builds character, as long as you learn from it. I don't believe in regret," Ramy explains.

Work is just half of what Ramy excels in. Outside the corporate cubicle, he is even more an expert.

Living by such statements as "Carpe Diem!" and "No day but today!" Ramy finds himself dabbling in extreme sports such as scuba diving, windsurfing and wall climbing. On other days, he just likes to hang around and relax with his buddies.

"I try not to think about work when I'm not working. In my own private time, I write impressions, notes, and reflections, listen to music, which can be a diverse range of types, watch films or drink Johnnie Walker, he says."

The idea of ultimate success for Ramy is an open-ended one, entertaining the possibility that it may never come.

"There are so many things to do in the world, and I'm not even close to half of the million things I want to do!" he says.

In the meantime, living by the day and setting himself out to do the things that need to be done at the moment, Ramy will keep walking in search for the next big thing.

"The ultimate satisfaction is in knowing that one day, I have contributed something to others, to society, and that I have left behind something significant," he says.

"I take the opportunity when I feel that it is the right thing to do at the moment. I work hard at it and after I am satisfied with what I have achieved, I move on to the next challenge," Ramy encapsulates," he adds.

MOVEMENTS

Prudential appointments

REMOLLO

PRUDENTIAL Guarantee and Assurance, Inc., the country's leading general insurance company, is pleased to announce the appointment of Felipe Antonio B. Remollo as senior vice president and head of legal department.

Remollo graduated from the Ateneo Law School and successfully practiced corporate law as managing partner of the Remollo Melocoton and Associates law firm. He was mayor of Dumaguete City from 1998 to 2001 and was chosen Most Outstanding City Mayor by the Consumers Union of the Philippines in 2000 and 2001.

He is presently a member of the Board of Trustees of Silliman University and is also involved in various socio-civic activities nationwide.

Unisys appoints new directors

UNISYS Philippines president and general manager Gabriel Leiva has announced the appointment of two new directors who joined the team of the e-business solutions company with several years of experience in the financial industry.

IT veteran Monchito Ibrahim takes on the position of sales director for financial services. In his new post, Ibrahim is responsible for growing the IT solutions business and servicing the expanding client base of Unisys Philippines in the financial services industry.

As sales director, he manages assigned strategic accounts on a national basis and provides professional leadership and coordination to the sales and support teams on focused key accounts. In his capacity, he is also expected to maintain high level executive contact, focusing on the establishment and maintenance of a strategic relationship with financial institutions.

Ibrahim's 26 years of experience in the Information Technology business of the financial sector covers the areas of business development and consulting to product and project management. He also brings to Unisys over 14 years of experience in managing sales and marketing teams, business units and project teams here and abroad.

Meanwhile, heading the human resources division is Marianne Fullon. As human resource director, Fullon provides assistance to line management on a broad range of human resource policies, programs and practices.

Her responsibility covers multiple areas of human resources, including employment, education and training, communications, compensation, benefits, record administration, employee or labor relations, affirmative action, as well as organization and manpower planning.

Fullon brings with her more than 15 years of experience in human resource management from such companies as International Exchange Bank (iBank) and United Coconut Planters Bank (Cocobank). Before joining Unisys, she was the vice president/head of the Recruitment and Compensation Center Human Resource Management cluster of iBank. At Cocobank, she held the post of senior manager/head of the Recruitment Sector, Human Resources Management Division.

New man at PIC Philippines

PIC Philippines has announced the appointment of Vicente M. Borromeo as general manager of the company.

BORROMEO

PIC (Pig Improvement Company) is the only foreign company in the field to have made a direct investment in establishing production, distribution and service infrastructure to cater to Filipino producers on a nationwide basis.

PIC International Group (PIC) was founded in the UK in 1962. With corporate headquarters now in California, it is one of the world's leading biotechnology companies focusing on swine genetics. PIC combines quantitative sciences with leading edge biotechnology to develop non-GMO breeding stock. PIC customers in over 30 countries worldwide, utilizing these technologies can breed healthy animals at a lower cost of production to provide a higher quality for the customer.

Equitable-PCI appointments

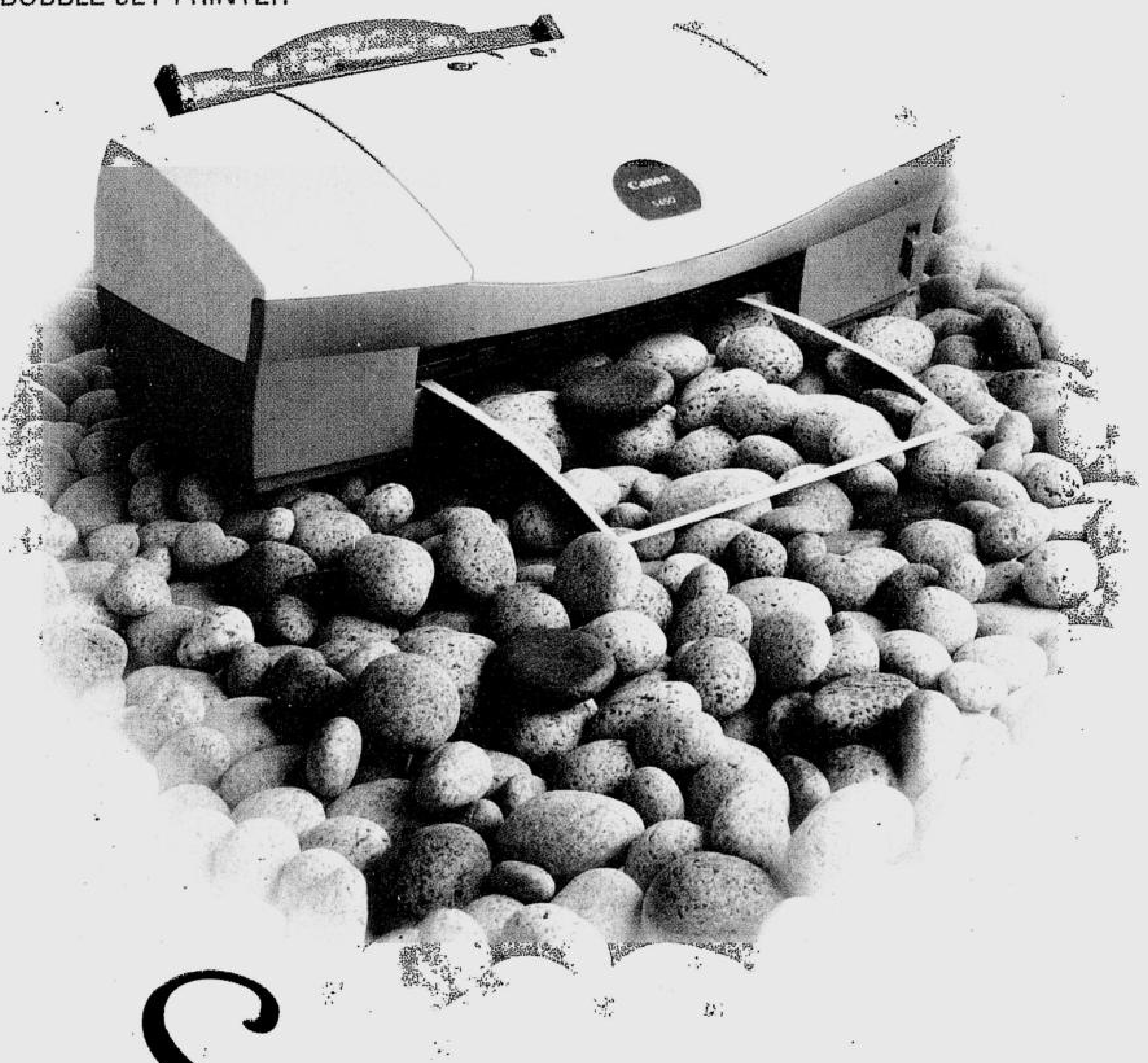
KATIGBAK

EQUITABLE-PCI Bank, one of the country's largest banks, recently appointed Eduardo J. Katigbak Jr as executive vice president and group head for operations to strengthen its management team and reinforce its leadership in major business lines.

Katigbak will have direct supervision over technology, transaction processing (formerly operations division), business systems, and centralized administration. He will be reporting directly to the president.

Prior to joining the Bank, Katigbak had spent more than 25 years in operations and other related areas in bank management. He was country operations manager of Deutsche Bank, where he was responsible for the management of all production functions of the Philippine branch covering transaction processing, technology initiatives, facilities management and business support activities. Before this, he was with BPI and Citibank, N.A.

Katigbak holds a BS degree in Business Administration from University of the Philippines.



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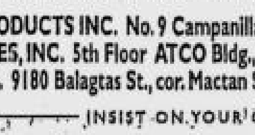

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Asians want banks to have a face

DESPITE the advent of the Internet and virtually real-time email, face-to-face interaction is still the most commonly used mode of interaction today between consumers and banks across the Asia Pacific region, including the Philippines.

This is one of the main findings that emerged from MasterCard International's latest Asian Ideals survey, a general interest study on the values and attitudes of consumers in 13 Asia/Pacific markets. The latest survey was conducted in June this year and involved 5,494 respondents from across the region.

Virtually 3 out of 4 respondents or 74 percent say they continue to have face-to-face interactions with their bank's representatives. All markets surveyed choose "flee-to-face" interactions as the most common mode of interaction with their banks. This is followed by interactions on the phone (39 percent), through the Internet (17 percent), and via regular mail or fax (7 percent).

Other highlights of the survey include:

Filipino respondents (78 percent) are among those in the region who prefer face-to-face interaction. The others are consumers in China and Thailand (87 percent each), Malaysia (86 percent). Korea (85 percent) and Indonesia (81 percent).

- Telephone interactions remain popular in Indonesia (65 percent), Singapore (51 percent), Korea (51 percent) and New Zealand (48 percent).
- Speed and convenience clearly make a difference. The Internet/E-mail is now preferred over interaction through regular mail and fax. Resorting to the Internet to get in touch with banks is especially popular among respondents from markets such as Singapore (37 percent), Korea (37 percent) and India (32 percent).
- While the Internet has clearly made general inroads in modern living, several Asian consumers are not too keen on using the technology for banking transactions. Consumers in Thailand (2 percent) seem to be the most indifferent to the Internet balancing, along with consumers in Japan (7 percent), Philippines (8 percent), China (8 percent), Malaysia (8 percent) and Taiwan (9 percent).

"As a global payments organization that works closely with its member banks, MasterCard strives to gather information that would help our member banks better meet the constantly evolving needs of consumers. Despite the influx of modern technology, it's interesting to note that consumers still prefer face-to-face interactions with representatives from banks for more important transactions. Modern technology just cannot replace the personal touch," said Stuart McDonald, MasterCard International senior vice president for Corporate Services, Asia/Pacific.

Are banks infallible?

More Filipino consumers seem to doubt the infallibility of their banks than those who believe their banks are error-free. 52 percent of the respondents from the Philippines said they do not believe their banks "almost never make a mistake in the monthly statements," and 48 percent said they believe their banks almost never make those errors.

However, the reverse is true for consumers regionwide, as 54 percent of the respondents in the entire region think that banks almost never commit errors on monthly bank statements while 46 percent think otherwise.

Interestingly, when asked whether they have had to dispute an item in their bank statements, most (77 percent) respondents from the Philippines said "No."

The Asian Ideals survey also reveals that regionwide, a noteworthy 29 percent claim to not inspect their monthly bank statements. Approximately 58 percent of respondents from China, 40 percent from Singapore and 33 percent from Korea do not go through their monthly bank statements. On the other hand, consumers from Indonesia (88 percent), India (87 percent) and Malaysia (79 percent) make it a point to comb through their monthly bank statements.

Survey respondents were also asked if they have ever had to dispute any item on a monthly bank statement and 22 percent of total respondents said they have. These disputes appear to be more prevalent in Australia (51 percent), New Zealand (43 percent) and Thailand (38 percent). The disputes tend to take place less in markets such as Japan (6 percent), Taiwan (6 percent) and China (10 percent).

About Asian ideals

The Asian Ideals survey, conducted by MasterCard International, is the only one of its kind in the region. It began in Quarter 3 1996 and has been conducted bi-annually since. The latest survey, undertaken in June 2001, represents findings conducted in 13 markets in the Asia/Pacific region: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. The last survey was conducted among a sample of 400 or more consumers in each of the 13 countries/territories listed above, except China where 600 interviews were carried out (200 in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou). A total of 5,494 respondents were surveyed. The Asian Ideals survey has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points at the 90-percent confidence level.

Bra makers target bigger women

NEW YORK—The days of full-figured women settling for dowdy, wide-strapped bras in plain colors are over, as US intimate apparel manufacturers take note of a niche market that has long been ignored.

For years, the lingerie industry has been tailoring sexy, fashionable bras for the average-framed woman. But as the average bra size has now grown from 34B to 36C, apparel makers see big business in marketing lighter and more revealing bras to the full-figured woman.

Joining the rapidly growing market segment are companies such as, Liz Claiborne Inc. and VF Corp. which are weighing in with their own new lines.

"If you look at dress sizes for size 14 plus, that's 35 percent of the apparel market, and that segment has been growing by 15 percent a year," said Ray Nadeau, president of Sara Lee's Playtex Apparel in Stamford, Connecticut.

Last year, plus-size sales totaled $19.8 billion, about one-fifth of all women's apparel sales, according to NPDFashionworld Consumer Panel, a consumer market search firm in Port Washington, New York. That's up 14 percent from the $17.3 billion in 1999.

"The full-figure industry across all apparel is growing and, within that, bras are playing an increasingly important part of that category," said Nadeau. Bras comprise 26 percent of plus-size apparel sales, he added.

Bigger Americans

Americans themselves have gotten bigger over the years, with more than half of adults being overweight. Nearly a quarter of them—22 percent—fall into the obese category, up from 16 percent 15 years ago, according to the National Institute of Health.

Contributing to the weight gain are lack of exercise and a high-fat diet, researchers say.

Karyn Monget, lingerie editor at fashion trade publication WWD in New York, says the increased consumption of fast food is also a reason for bigger bra sizes.

And demographics are a factor. As more women grow older and heavier, "the need for more control and support garments will also grow," Playtex's Nadeau said.

Even average-sized women are now buying bigger bras because of the popularity of breast enhancements, such as inflatable pads and plastic surgery, said Linda LoRe, president of lingerie seller Frederick's of Hollywood in Los Angeles, where full-figure bra sales have soared 60 percent in the last three years.

"Despite all the different forms of breast enhancement going on, there haven't been many particularly pretty, full-figured bras out there. Now a larger percentage of the population is wearing a larger size, and far more full-figure bras are being sought after," said LoRe.

New Technology

In response to the growing demand, the makers of intimate apparel are starting to market full-figure bras in a variety of colors with plunging fronts, thin straps, lacy inserts and other features previously seen only in average sizes.

Later this month, Liz Claiborne will launch its first full-figure line of bras, which are lighter and offer less coverage than traditional full-support bras, said a spokesperson. In September, Vanity Fair will begin selling its new Woman line.

"The idea behind the styling is to offer fuller-figured women the same fashionable styles that smaller women have. This consumer has been starved for fashion," said Kathy Reynolds, vice president of Vanity Fair in Atlanta.

Expanding girths and increased buying power aren't the only factors behind the growth of the full-figured bra market. New technology and fabrics have allowed bra makers to construct larger bras that don't sacrifice fashion for comfort, said Nadeau. Sara Lee, the world's biggest bra seller, has pioneered recent innovations such as stretch cotton, seamless styling and gel straps, he said.

"There's a lot more selection in fabrics and advancements in technology allowing us to build a full-figured bra with aesthetic appeal that works," said Nadeau, adding that bra sales have grown from 6 percent to 8 percent a year over the past three years. "That's been a very important trend for the industry." *Reuters*

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Full access landline texting now available

You are in the middle of nowhere and you badly need to text someone, only to find that your cell phone battery has run out. Or maybe your son couldn't contact you to tell you that he needs art materials for a project due tomorrow, when you are already at the bookstore. Has these ever happened to you?

Philippine Wireless Inc. (PWI) helps you take these unexpected moments in stride, with their new, worry-free, landline texting service called Freehand.

Freehand is PWI's 24-hour telecommunication service, which allows subscribers to send text messages from any landline touch-tone phone to any cellular phone.

"We found that customers' main concern regarding other landline-text services is that these are anchored only on one particular phone number," said Mari Muñoz, business director of PWI. "Since Freehand is acquired through a prepaid account, subscribers are able to transmit messages from any landline – whether it be one in the home or in the sari-sari store," Munoz continued.

Muñoz added that Freehand accounts can also be shared by individuals. A mother, for example, may opt to get a Freehand account for her children and her household help. Or an executive can choose to use Freehand for his assistants and staff.

How about experiencing difficulty sending messages to a phone subscribed to a different telecommunication network? Freehand puts a stop to that because, aside from flexibility, it also eases any customer concerns on interconnection. Subscribers need not feel their reach is limited, since all messages sent via Freehand can reach any text-capable cell phone, regardless of its telecom provider.

Muñoz summarized the beauty of Freehand in one quick sentence. "Freehand is the solution to people's need to send messages from any phone, anywhere."

To avail of Freehand, interested parties may call 1228-1111111.

PAN PACIFIC GOES HAWAIIAN

Top accounts from the corporate sector and the travel agencies were given recognition in the recently held 2nd Traveler's Palm Awards Night. The theme of the night was Hawaiian. The Pan Pacific Manila team is shown headed by general manager Desmond Acheson.

WATER PIPELINE TO ANTIPOLO

Manila Water, in cooperation with the Antipolo local government, has begun laying out a pipeline that will provide water for the residents of Barangay Cupang. Because of the high elevation of the barangay, residents usually buy from bulk water vendors at a high price. Once completed, the pipeline facility will supply water that will be economical and beneficial to 600 households, or 2,400 residents. Shown is Antipolo Mayor Angelito C. Gatlabayan (left) with Manila Water president Antonino T. Aquino (second from right) shoveling during the groundbreaking ceremony. Also shown is Loida S. Diño, Manila Water Taguig Pateros and Rizal business area manager.

DLSU-D schedules historical awareness campaign

THE CAVITE studies center (CSC) of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSU-D) is holding its third annual three-month historical awareness campaign dubbed "History in the Local Context: The Caviteño Experience." The activity aims to highlight the participation of the Caviteños in shaping the nation's history.

The campaign kicked off with a tribute to Caviteño revolutionist and historian Dn. Gervasio Pangilinan (posthumous) last July.

This August, the book "Cavite in Focus: Essays on Local Histography" was launched. The book is a compilation of papers delivered during a seminar on Cavite local history.

Finally, the third annual seminar on Cavite local history and culture will cap the campaign in September. The seminar will focus on the history of Virgen de la Soledad de Porta Vaga, Chabacano of Cavite, The Merceditas of Ternate, Naic in the 19th Century and other essays on local history.

For inquiries, call the DLSU-D CSC at (02) 844-7832, (046) 416-4531 local 3141.

WORLD-CLASS ATHLETES AT PHILIPS X-RAGE

The world's top X-games pro-athletes were in the country for the Manila Leg of Philips X-rage held recently at The Fort Summer Camp, Bonifacio Global City. The athletes gave demos and served as judges for the Philips X-rage competitions. The event, which was organized by Philips Consumer Electronics (PCE), one of the world's biggest consumer electronics companies, is an extreme games festival and competition open to enthusiasts of BMX riding, in-line skating and skateboarding. Shown is PCE general manager Tony Lim (fourth from left) with pro-athletes (from left) Zacky 'Webber' Murphy, Joshua Heino, Tyler Shields, Willy Santos, JD Heino, tour director Mitchell Schwartz and Michael Peterson.

Toys galore in Kimy's 'Spell and Win' promo

HAVE you ever wondered what Kimy, the cool and hip Eskimo of Nestlé ice cream has in store for children now? After giving away toys that they took great delight in collecting, he's back once again with something that will excite kids from all over the country.

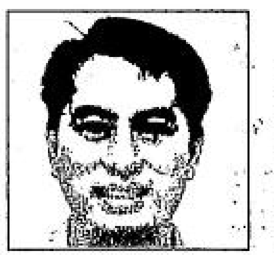
The Kimy Spell and Win promo is Kimy's latest offer for the kids. The Kimy Spell and Win promo allows kids to win fun and exciting prizes. In each wooden stick of Kimy, either the letter K, I, M or Y is embossed. All they have to do is form the word K-I-M-Y to win the all-new Gameboy Advance. How exciting is that? They enjoy the wonderful flavors of Kimy Swirls and Kimy Jelly Jiggle and they get a chance to win a Gameboy Advance as well.

But that's not enough. Thousands of Kimy Jelly Jiggle and Splatter Balls can also be won. The Kimy Jelly Jiggles and Splatter Balls can be redeemed from the nearest sari-sari stores. The more Kimy Swirls and Kimy Jiggle ice cream that they buy, the greater their chance of winning these prizes.

WILKINS AT PPSI CONVENTION

Wilkins Distilled Water recently participated in the Philippine Pediatric Society Inc.'s (PPSI) 38th annual convention at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel. With the convention's theme 'Cyber Pediatrics: Maximizing Access to Health Care', several discussions were conducted by guest speaker Dr. Benjamin Vitasa, professor and dean at the College of Public Health, University of the Philippines-Manila. Shown is Vitasa discussing the importance of clean and safe drinking water, especially to babies and children. He also delved into the advantages of distilled drinking water compared with other unsafe water resources in the market.

New BESC property manager



NERIC

BONIFACIO Estate Services Corporation (BESC), the facilities management arm of Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation (FBDC), welcomes Noel C. Neric as its new property manager. BESC is in charge of all aspects of running and administering the Global City in terms of the delivery of facilities, utilities and services. As property manager, Neric is responsible for ensuring the smooth operations of the entire city.

Noel C. Neric earned his Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Mapua Institute of Technology and at present is taking his MBA at the Ateneo Graduate School of Business. Neric has extensive experience in property management, having been one of the key officers of other leading property developers in the country prior to his joining BESC.

PROFIL BRUSSELS AT WORLD APPAREL MARKET

Well aware of the quota-free environment to happen by 2005 and the importance of market presence in European countries, GTEB organized the first Philippine participation in the World Apparel Market (WAM) last April 3 to 5 at the Brussels Exhibition Centre in Belgium. PROfil cluster collections showcased in London were also presented at WAM. The Philippine Pavilion's design, which projected a 'boutique' look, wowed buyers for its uniqueness compared to the other booth designs. Shown at the pavilion were (from left) Lumen Rodriguez of Europhil, Wilma Bayani of Multi-Link Apparel, Hazel Chong of Blu Bell Commodities, Romy Borillo, Philippine Commercial Attache to Belgium, and Willie Lim of Multi-Link Apparel.

Johnny Bravo cool kit

HEY kids, it's time to put some fun when you clean up. Get a cool Johnny Bravo stuff when you buy a Mister Donut Funbox. For just P99, you can purchase a Mister Donut Funbox with 13 pieces of Junior Donuts, and get any of these useful items bearing colorful Johnny Bravo designs: toothbrush with case, towel, mug with cover or a tote bag. Collect all four to complete your bathroom action. Hurry and buy a Mister Donut Funbox now, and let this free spirit brighten your day. Promo runs until Aug. 31.

BITS Clips

AIM arts management program

THE ASIAN Institute of Management will have a launching ceremony of its "Managing the Arts Program" on Thursday, Aug. 30, 11:30 a.m. at the JV del Rosario Function Room of the AIM Conference Center (ACCM) in Makati. The newly designed Managing the Arts Program is a two-week practitioner-oriented certificate program scheduled to run from Oct. 15 to 27. It will eventually be offered in the various facilities of AIM throughout the Asian region. It is a response to the growing demand for higher professional skills and competencies among arts managers and cultural workers in the Philippines and Asia. For further information, call Rowena Hidalgo at 892-4011 local 180 or Janet Caraan at 817-2718 or 892-4011 local 361.

Wastewater treatment seminar

THE WATER Environment Association of the Philippines (WEAP), in cooperation with the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP), will hold a one-day technical seminar on alternative technologies on industrial wastewater treatment. The seminar will be held on Aug. 31 at the Holiday Inn, Ermita, Manila. Experts will share their experiences, researches and case studies on the treatment and disposal of wastewater generated from processing plants. For details, call WEAP secretariat at 371-9790 or 410-1119.

HOTEL 'AT YOUR SERVICE'

New World Renaissance Hotel has recently launched a new department designed to solely take care of all its guests' needs–'At Your Service' (AYS). With AYS, in-house guests will simply have to make one call for all the assistance that they may require, from housekeeping to laundry, front desk to concierge, and engineering to reservations. 'At Your Service' is an exclusive feature in Marriott International-managed hotels and New World Renaissance Hotel is the first property in Asia to have introduced this new undertaking along with its commitment to continuously improve the services it offers to its valued guests. New World Renaissance Hotel's 'At Your Service' team, headed by manager Liza Alas (seated) all set to take care of all guests' needs.

BENGZON AT ASIA PACIFIC TELECOMS FORUM

DOTC Undersecretary for communications Agustin R. Bengzon (second from left) presides at a session on 'Telecom Regulatory Regimes in different Institutional Environments' during the recently concluded Asia Pacific Telecommunications Regulation Forum jointly organized by the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and the World Bank in Phuket, Thailand. Undersecretary Bengzon, who was the head of the Philippine delegation, also presented a paper on 'ICT Initiatives and Privatization in the Philippines' during the forum which was attended by government officials engaged in Telecom Policy and Regulation from 24 countries in the Asia Pacific Region. Also shown were (from left) APT executive director Jong Soon Lee, and sessions speakers Dr. Eun-ju Kim (ITU), Carlo Maria Rossotto (World Bank), professor Rohon Samarajiva (Netherlands) and Tan Sri Nuraizah binti Abdul Hamid (Malaysia).

Getting together 1,000 execs without a hitch

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

WHAT does it take to get over 1,000 executives of varied nationalities from several parts of the world together in one conference?

Needless to say, a lot.

The preparations take a year and if it is an annual conference, start immediately after the last one ends.

MasterCard VP for communications Georgette Tan looked like she had not slept for days, on the day before the opening of the card firm's annual Asia/Pacific regional meeting in Australia last June.

"After the last one, you go right into preparations for the next," she said.

It's been non-stop work for her during the weeks before the conference as they worked at ensuring that the 1,000 participants, mostly members of the MasterCard family, are provided with all their individual requirements.

These include being picked up from the airport and being shuttled to their respective hotels, get their fed particular dietary preferences, and then shuttled back to the airport for the flights home after the three-day meeting.

For the June meeting, held in Gold Coast, six hotels were used to book the delegates in.

MasterCard created a core team of about 10 people and assigned each person to take charge of a certain aspect of the preparations—transportation, logistics, merchandise and inventory, registration and hotel bookings.

Consultants were hired to take charge of certain aspects of the conference. Tan said an expert in fairs was tapped to take charge of the technology fair dubbed "The Future of Money Technology Fair."

A local tour group, called Aries Tours, was hired to provide transportation for all delegates.

Each participant pays for his or her own fare and hotel accommodations, which amounted to about $1,800 while MasterCard provided for the rest.

"There is a lot of anxiety on the preparations because everybody is important—media, members, business associates. They have to be picked up from the airport and transferred to the right hotels. We have to know who is vegetarian, who requires halal (animals were slaughtered according to the Muslim ways) food," Tan said.

Beyond the logistics, however, Tan said it is also important that a balance between substance and form be struck for the conference.

"You may have the right environment, the right hotel, but if the conference has no content, nothing," said the Singapore-based official.

MasterCard's senior managers decide on the focus of the meeting. For this year the focus was e-commerce and the chip.

For the first time, registration for the conference was done via the Internet. Tan said 10 people took two meetings of six hours each to draw up the words in the registration site to make sure no confusion occurred.

She said the Net registration made them more efficient as no registration papers were lost and the date was immediately encoded in the computers.

Tan, of course, is mum about the cost of the conference, which obviously runs up to a few million dollars.

"It's a good investment for MasterCard. It's a wonderful way for member relations. The members get to see other members and hear case studies. The meetings put forward best practices for themselves," she said.

MasterCard's members are mostly banks who issue the credit cards. In the Philippines there are about 10 member banks such as Citibank and BPI.

MasterCard's annual meeting was held in the Philippines in 1996 and organizers say it was also quite successful. The only thing unique then was that a guideline on what to do in case of a kidnapping was included in the delegate's kit.

The Asia Pacific annual meeting of MasterCard was started seven years ago. Separate meetings in Europe, Latin America and the US are also held annually.

Last year it was held in Malaysia, which was the largest ever for MasterCard globally and the most extensive in the payments industry in the region.

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TAN says conferences take a year to prepare.

Office product retailers welcome online success

NEW YORK—Selling lots of staplers, rubber bands and toner may not be what entrepreneurs had in mind when they dreamed of riches in the dotcom world.

But office product retailers have the last laugh as they become among to first to score victories online, pulling out big gains in quarterly sales and earnings, even as their overall profits show strain.

While a wave of dotcoms were reporting failures recently, office giant Staples Inc. had a different story to tell. The No. 2 US office products retailer Tuesday reported that its online arm posted a profit for the first time in the fiscal second quarter—six months ahead of schedule—despite the fact that Staples' overall company earnings slid 5.5 percent. No. 1 retailer Office Depot Inc. has also reported stellar gains in its office unit, despite the economic slowdown.

The online office-supply breakthrough comes just as online travel agents and flower retailers, such as Expedia.com and 1-800-FLOWERS.com, have also edged into the black. In all of those businesses industry middlemen, travel agents and brokers, are being replaced by automated systems, lowering costs for consumers.

"(Office supply retailers) are encouraging it in the same way airlines are urging people to book online, therefore bypassing the travel agent commission," said David Buchsbaum, an analyst for Wachovia Securities.

Office supplies have an advantage over other businesses that have tried to go online: Its product doesn't need to be picked up and examined to be purchased.

"Unlike other product categories, you can pretty much tell what you are going to get, whether they are pens or ink toners," he added. "You don't need to try it on."

Not a new strategy

The leading office supply chains have moved aggressively online to set up their businesses, rather than lose market share to online suppliers. Staples has been working for years to boost its online presence, through acquisitions and internal growth.

Now it's hitting its stride. The office products leader reported last month that sales at its Internet business, which includes Officedepot.com, Vikingpop.com, contract business-to-business sites as well as nine international Web sites, rocketed 64 percent to $360.2 million for the fiscal second quarter, compared with $220.3 million a year ago.

The gains came despite a weak overall market. Office Depot's total sales for the period slipped 3 percent to $2.6 billion from last year.

"They are finally getting to levels of critical mass," said Todd Kuhrt, an analyst for Midwest Research. "They are finally getting to the point where they can leverage fixed operating expenses with larger sales bases," he said. *Reuters*

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BUSINESSMonday

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

Waiters here get more than $912 a month

BY DENNIS M. ARROYO

THIS NATION in Europe needs foreign workers to feed its booming economy. Labor policies are relaxed to draw in more cooks, waiters, nurses, cleaning staff and software programmers.

I was not aware that the demand for workers was so deep until I talked to some Irish friends. Even if wages are rising, they can't get hold of enough employees and have to recruit from abroad. All those talk about astounding wage rates led to some Internet research.

Growth in 2000

It's no wonder why the Irish can pay $912 per month for ordinary labor.

In the entire Western world, Ireland races along as the fastest growing economy. Since 1994, growth has averaged 8.5 percent, hovering between 8 percent and 10 percent. That's four times the average growth in the European Union.

Last year growth was a blistering 11 percent. Due to the slowdown in the global economy, it should cool to 8 percent in 2001 and 7 percent in 2002.

One reason for the boom is the inflow of foreign investment. In fact Ireland was ranked 1st by Time magazine among 54 countries in drawing in foreign investment.

Fueled by Investments

The corporate tax rate for certain businesses is 10 percent, around one-third the average for the European Union. From 2003 the rate for all businesses will be standardized to 12.5 percent.

The Wall Street Journal in July 1998 cited Ireland as the model economy for the continent. It was the exemplar of business-friendly policies. There are more than 800 internationally traded financial services based in the capital.

US investment in France is just around one-sixth of US investment in Ireland. And yet France has a population 16 times that of Ireland.

Raging export machine

Investment in turn led to the nation's great export push. In 1998 its export of goods resulted in a huge trade surplus of 14 billion Irish pounds. As a ratio to gross domestic product, that's the highest in the industrialized world. Such exports make up 84 percent of its GDP.

Today Ireland is the globe's third largest exporter per capita, after Singapore and Belgium.

The economy is rapidly becoming more and more hi-tech. Thirty years ago Ireland was mainly agricultural, and manufactured exports counted for only 20 percent of the total. Today the ratio of manufactured exports exceeds 70 percent.

Ireland is currently the second-largest exporter of software services in the whole world, after the United States.

Troubled by labor shortage

Two main problems are bugging the island nation, though.

One is inflation. The economy is simply overheating: people are awash with earnings, so they have all the incentive to buy more and more. This drives up demand and raises prices. Inflation stands at 6.8 percent, above the European norm. (That was the inflation rate for the Philippines in July 2001.)

Think tank studies say that inflation will likewise cool to 4 percent in two years. The other big problem is the extreme labor shortage. The nation has less than 4 million people and has to find workers to feed the boom.

Unemployment has been dropping from the high 20 percent in the 1980s—it is now only 3.8 percent. The government was advised to expand the labor force rather than keep on raising salaries.

Welcome, foreign workers

So the government is welcoming more foreign workers as they are in demand in all industries. The hungriest sector is information technology. Staff turnover averages 16 percent in the I.T. sector, even as 70 percent of firms are planning to increase their work force during the year.

According to one report, more than 90 percent of I.T. companies are having a hard time finding more staff.

That's not all. Self-employment is expanding at twice the rate of company employment. A report forecasts that by 2003, one out of every six workers will be self-employed.

The boom and labor shortages are everywhere. Bricklayers get much overtime pay because of the flurry of construction. Workers are needed much in hotels, catering and tourism. Nurses are very much in demand. The nation wants cooks, waiters, cleaning staff, housekeepers.

The labor shortage is drawing firms to look beyond Europe for workers. Work permits have more than doubled. The government has relaxed work permit requirements and is welcoming more immigrants.

Because of the labor shortage, human resources rule. Companies are competing for workers by providing housing and two meals. Filipinos are cashing in on the packages, so OFWs can be found in Ireland.

(Email your comments to dennisarroyo@yahoo.com.)

Worst not yet over for mutual fund investors

NEW YORK—Money market mutual funds, a parking place for $2.1 trillion of cash, are paying out less than they have in years, punishing investors seeking interest income along with safety.

There are, however, alternatives that offer bigger yields.

The first step is to see what yields your money is getting now, since rates just keep going steadily lower. The average for seven-day simple yields on taxable money market funds was 3.21 percent for the latest week ended Aug. 21, or 1.89 percent for tax-free funds, according to fund tracker iMoneyNet Inc. of Westborough, Massachusetts.

These returns are nearing the all-time low yields of 2.59 percent and 1.58 percent, set in the weeks ending May 25, 1993 and July 13, 1993, respectively.

"These yields are making it difficult to stay in cash because they're approaching zero, after inflation," said Peter Crane, iMoneyNet's vice president and managing editor. "Investors are beginning to seek alternatives."

The worst may not be over, either.

Money fund yields closely track movement in short-term rates set by the Federal Reserve. On Tuesday the Fed cut rates for a seventh time in 2001 to prop the ailing US economy. Its three percentage points of cuts have hurt income investors, and Crane expects the average taxable money fund yield to dip to 3 percent in a month.

"Investors are now getting a cut in their paychecks, in a sense, and it doesn't feel good," said Robert Smith, president and chief investment officer at Spero-Smith Investment Advisers in Beachwood, Ohio. "You should assess whether all of the short-term funds you have really need to be short-term."

Few appealing options

Most experts agree that investors should not plow cash they need soon into stocks. Unfortunately, for investors with such funds, the remaining pickings are lean.

Bonds, bond funds and bank loan funds carry yields from 5 percent into double digits. But these are sensitive to rate changes and credit risk, and like stocks often lose value.

Meanwhile, ultrasafe US Treasury bills yield well below 4 percent.

Within the money fund sphere, there are ways to pick up extra yield. The easiest is to find a mutual fund with low expenses, or one temporarily waiving some expenses—so long as investors keep an eagle eye for the end of those waivers.

Investors in high-tax states may want to consider Treasury money funds. These usually carry lower yields—the average 7-day simple yield is now 3.06 percent, according to iMoneyNet—but state taxes usually won't be due on the income.

Investors in high tax brackets may also consider municipal money funds, which are federally tax-free, and mini funds from their home states, which can be double or triple tax-free.

One alternative to money funds is the "ultrashort term" bond fund, which buys debt maturing in a year or so. These aren't risk-free, but their values usually fluctuate little.

The largest, the $3.4-billion Strong Advantage fund, has not since 1990 suffered a 2-percent capital loss in any year, according to fund service Morningstar Inc. of Chicago, which calls it a "Fund Analyst" pick. The fund has returned 4.5 percent this year, and recently yielded 6.32 percent.

"The (yield) spread between bonds and money market funds is wider than it has been in years, and that's causing money to flow into longer-term bonds and bond funds," said Crane.

Banks offer choices

Other options for income investors come from banks, whose money market accounts and certificates of deposit are usually federally insured.

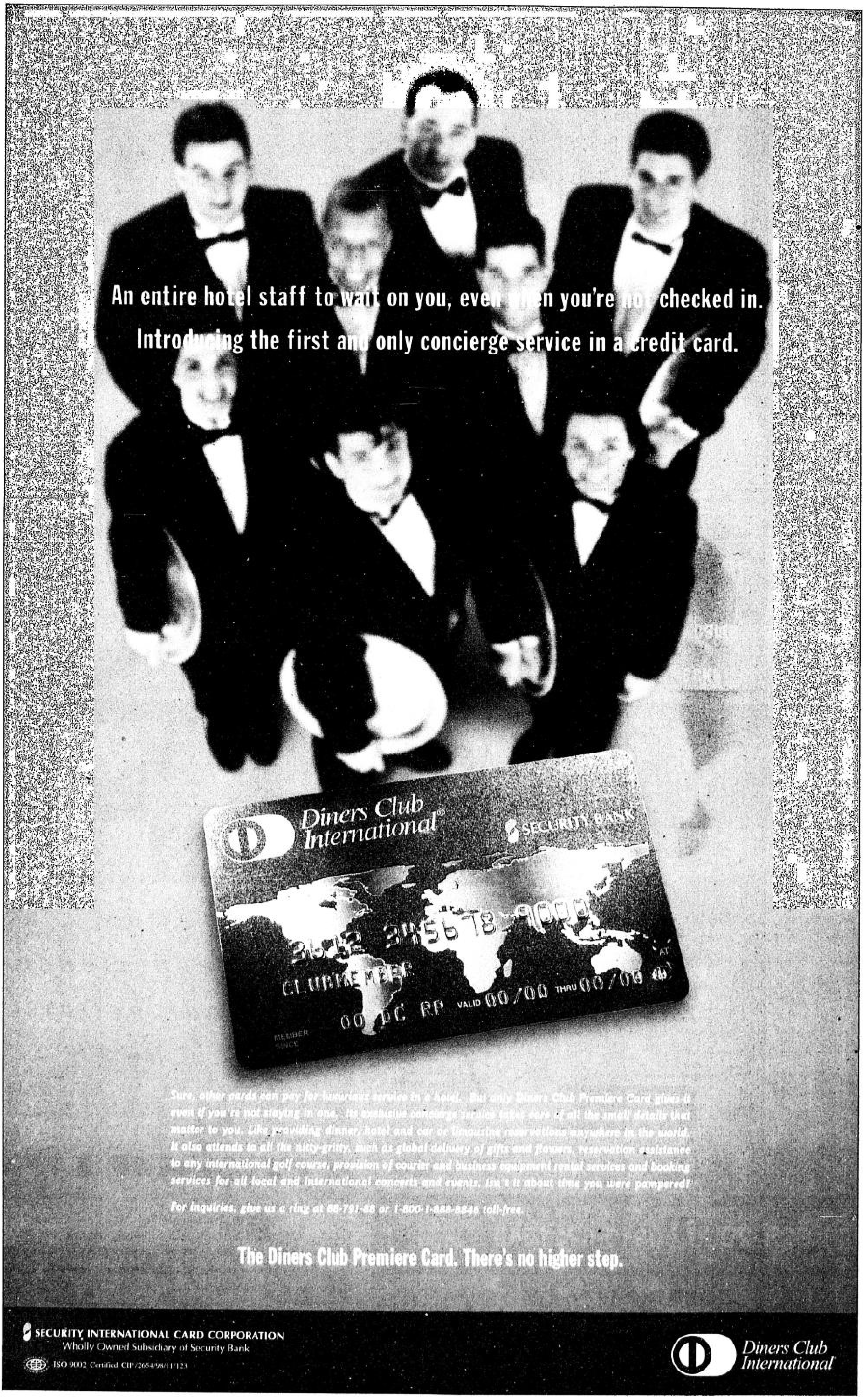
According to www.bankrate.com, dozens of banks still offer money market yields topping 4 percent, and as high as 4.5 percent, though these yields are not fixed, and can fall.

And many CDs, maturing in three months to five years, still yield between 4 percent and 6 percent, according to bankrate.com. These, however, carry early withdrawal penalties.

Locking up money at low current rates for a long time could backfire. Some economists expect the economy to regain so much steam that the Fed will be forced to raise interest rates next year to quell the threat of inflation.

Smith recommends "laddered" CD portfolios, where investors buy several higher-yielding, longer-maturity CDs maturing at different times. "The chance interest rates could rise is a reason to have CDs coming due all the time so you're not forced to sell CDs and pay penalties to chase higher rates," he said.

Reuters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SCULPTOR Michael Cacnio poses with one of his works.

MICHAEL CACNIO

His art is his playground

It is in his thematic forays into the uncorrupted simplicities of Filipino life, family and childhood that the sculptor molds his indelible imprimatur on Philippine art

BY JOHNATHAN LIBARIOS RONDINA

WHILE still a happy-go-lucky fine arts major with a proclivity for fast cars and automotive gadgets, Michael Cacnio was hired by Proctor and Gamble for a two-month summer stint sketching caricatures of the company's top executives. "I was paid a measly P2,500 for two months' work," he recalls.

Today, some 10 years later, 32-year old Cacnio is a changed man in more ways than one. Not only has he upped his market value manyfold, he is also now regarded as a leading figure in contemporary Philippine sculpture.

The breakthrough seems to have occurred shortly after graduating from college when Cacnio decided to shift from painting to sculpture. The move was as much tactical as it was preferential. The youngest son of master watercolorist Angel Cacnio, Michael took offense at criticisms hurled at him by classmates. "*Gawa ng tatay*," they would jeer at his early works.

Cacnio hated the malicious insinuations but not the comparisons. If anything, Cacnio holds his father in awe and considers him his greatest artistic influence. That influence came early for the would-be sculptor who started drawing with

HIS/p. D2

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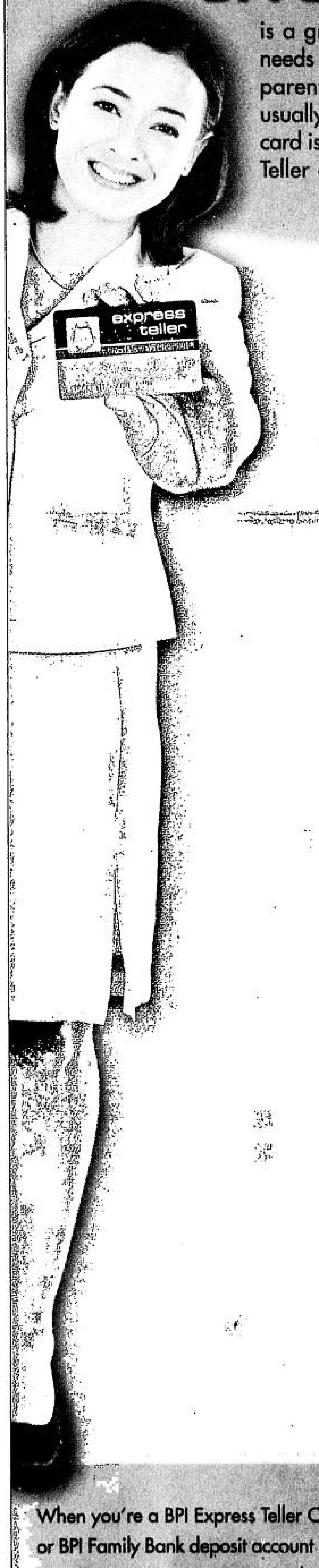
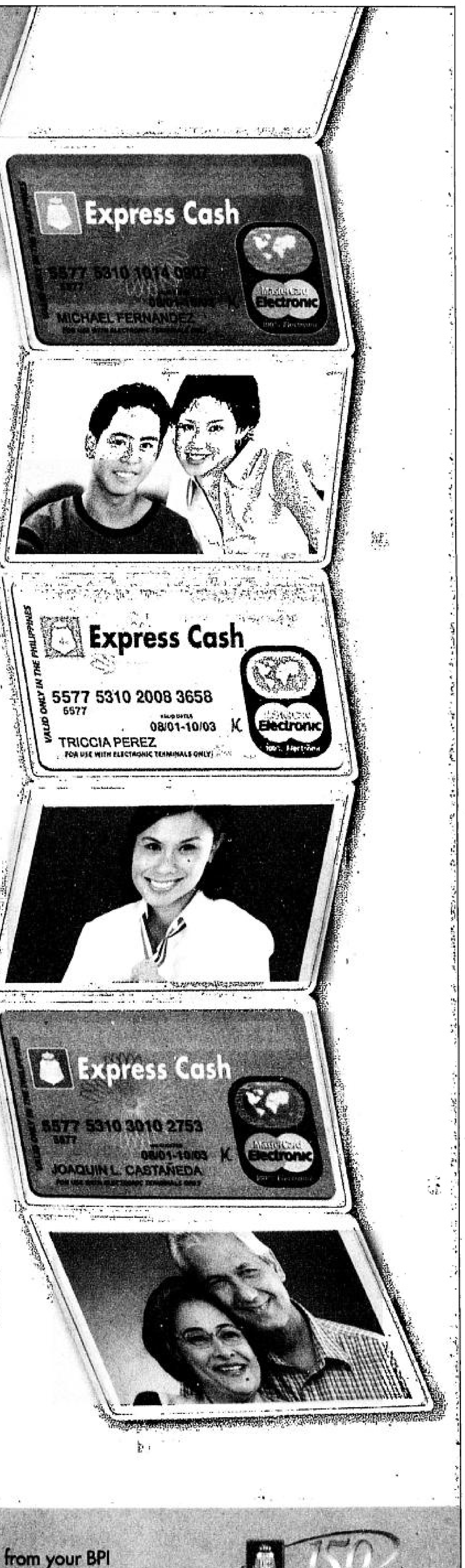
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His art is his playground

(From page D1)

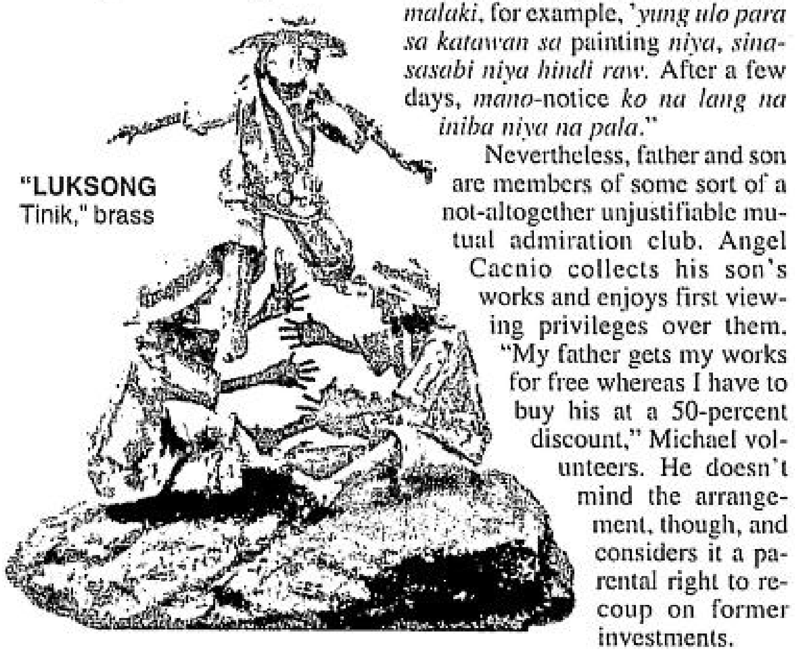
a distinct, strong hand at age 6 while observing his father paint at his studio. Later, when Michael decided to pursue fine arts studies at the University of the Philippines, the older Cacnio, much like the father in the popular PLDT commercial, was both happy and supportive of his son.

Tale of two artists

The artistic bond between the two Cacnios remains strong to this day. Theirs is a tale of two gifted artists who are bound by genes and familial love. "We are each other's worst critics," Michael says. The older Cacnio does not mince words and sometimes brands his son's works "*pangit.*" The sculptor, for his part, would occasionally tell his father that the heads on his figures are disproportionate.

"KARERA," brass

"*Ako,* I listen to him. *'Pag sinasabi niyang kailangan ng kurba, ng galaw ng ganito o ganyang* movement, *inuulit ko ang trabaho. Pero siya, pag sinabi kong medyo malaki,* for example, *'yung ulo para sa katawan sa* painting *niya, sinasasabi niya hindi raw.* After a few days, *mano-*notice *ko na lang na iniba niya na pala.*"



"LUKSONG Tinik," brass

Nevertheless, father and son are members of some sort of a not-altogether unjustifiable mutual admiration club. Angel Cacnio collects his son's works and enjoys first viewing privileges over them. "My father gets my works for free whereas I have to buy his at a 50-percent discount," Michael volunteers. He doesn't mind the arrangement, though, and considers it a parental right to recoup on former investments.

Brass sculptures

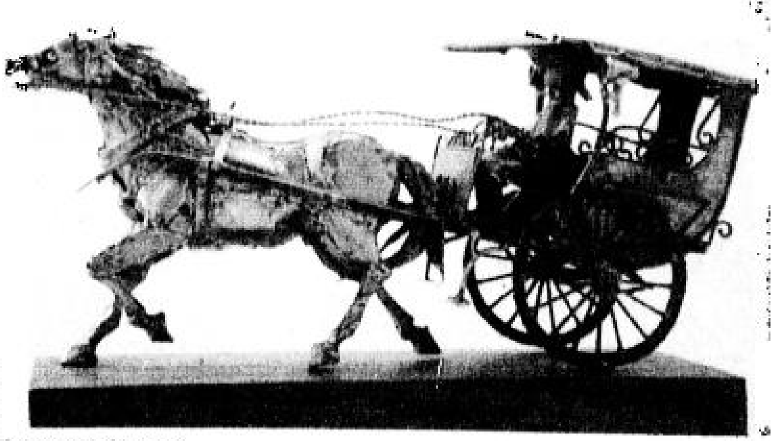
That Michael's sculptures are reminiscent of his father's figurative paintings is obvious, perhaps even inevitable. But it is in his decision to shift media that the sculptor manages to come out of his father's shadow and find his own place in the sun. Cacnio sculpts brass figures, an art form that requires agile hands and a creative mind. He likens himself to a tailor, drawing patterns on heavy, brass sheets which he cuts then fashions into a myriad of golden figures that celebrate life's glorious moments using a blow torch and a welding rod.

"*Mas madali para sa'kin ang* brass sculpting," he says, although the burn marks on his hands say otherwise. "*Sa* painting *kasi,* you have to wait for a long time for your figures to come out," he explains, "but in sculpting they manifest themselves easily, allowing you a sense of instant artistic gratification."

Cacnio's playground

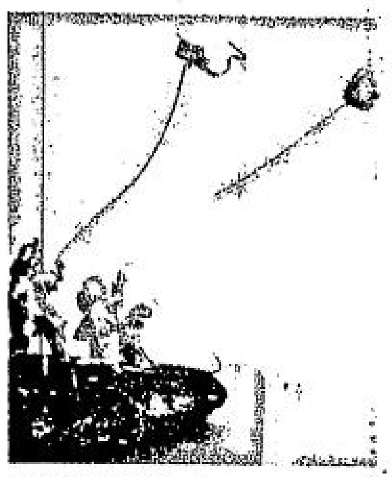
But there is nothing impatient, hurried, nor careless about Cacnio's sculptures. In fact, one sees in his brass renditions a studied and careful temperance, the kind that is necessary in the violent, orgasmic fusion of fire and metal. Any hint of imperfection, say, in the rough edges or discolorations, serve merely to focus the viewer's attention not to the detail but the overall figure, its movement, shape and dimension.

It is, however, in Cacnio's thematic forays into the uncorrupted simplicities of Filipino life, family and childhood that the sculptor molds his indelible imprimatur on Philippine art. His art, it seems, is his playground, a paean to the Filipino's playful spirit, natural charm and happy disposition.



"ONGPIN," brass

Cacnio is best known for his "Bata" series, brass sculptures that depict children playing different folk games and other popular sports. Notable works in this series include "Sipa," "Sungka," "Saranggola," "Luksong Tinik," "Patintero," "Gagamba" and "Hoops." Indeed, at a time when Filpino kids would rather play Counter Strike, Tamiyas, or PlayStations, Cacnio's art takes a preservationist stance, challenging us to take pride in the beauty of our traditions and rich cultural heritage.



"KITE Fliers," brass

On the other hand, some of Cacnio's sculptures, like his "Mangingisda" works explore the man-nature dichotomy. But rather than place it on a man-versus-nature equation, the message is that of symbiotic co-habitation where neither variable is master of the other. From Cacnio's skilled hands, too, are borne singular figures in moments of quiet introspection, of fishermen lost in the moment of catching bounty, of children immersed in the pleasure of reading, and of men, women and children caught up in the rapture of song or dance.

Cacnio considers strong family ties as the Filipino's strongest trait, something that is quite evident in many of his sculptures. His "Father and Son" and "Mother and Child" series are sentimental renditions of the parent-child bond, inspired by his own close ties with his family.

"PAGMAMAHAL ni Ina," brass

Blessing and responsibility

Cacnio maintains regular working hours as though he were a Makati-based office worker and sculpts from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday to Fridays. Evenings are reserved for quality time with his wife, Theresa, and their 3-year-old son, Joshua, in their newly built house in Tivoli Greens, Quezon City, paid for in large part by his earnings from the robust sales of his works.

A pastor of the Iglesia ng Diyos kay Kristo Hesus, Cacnio credits his success to divine providence. "God has been good to me," he says. He views his success as both blessing and responsibility. Unlike other artists who fall victim to their own egotistical mood swings, Cacnio makes it a point to stage shows regularly.

"An artist has to be visible," he says "not just for his career's sake but for his patrons as well. *Nag-*invest *sila sa* work *mo, kaya dapa ibalik mo 'yung* investment *nila* by improving your name and your work."

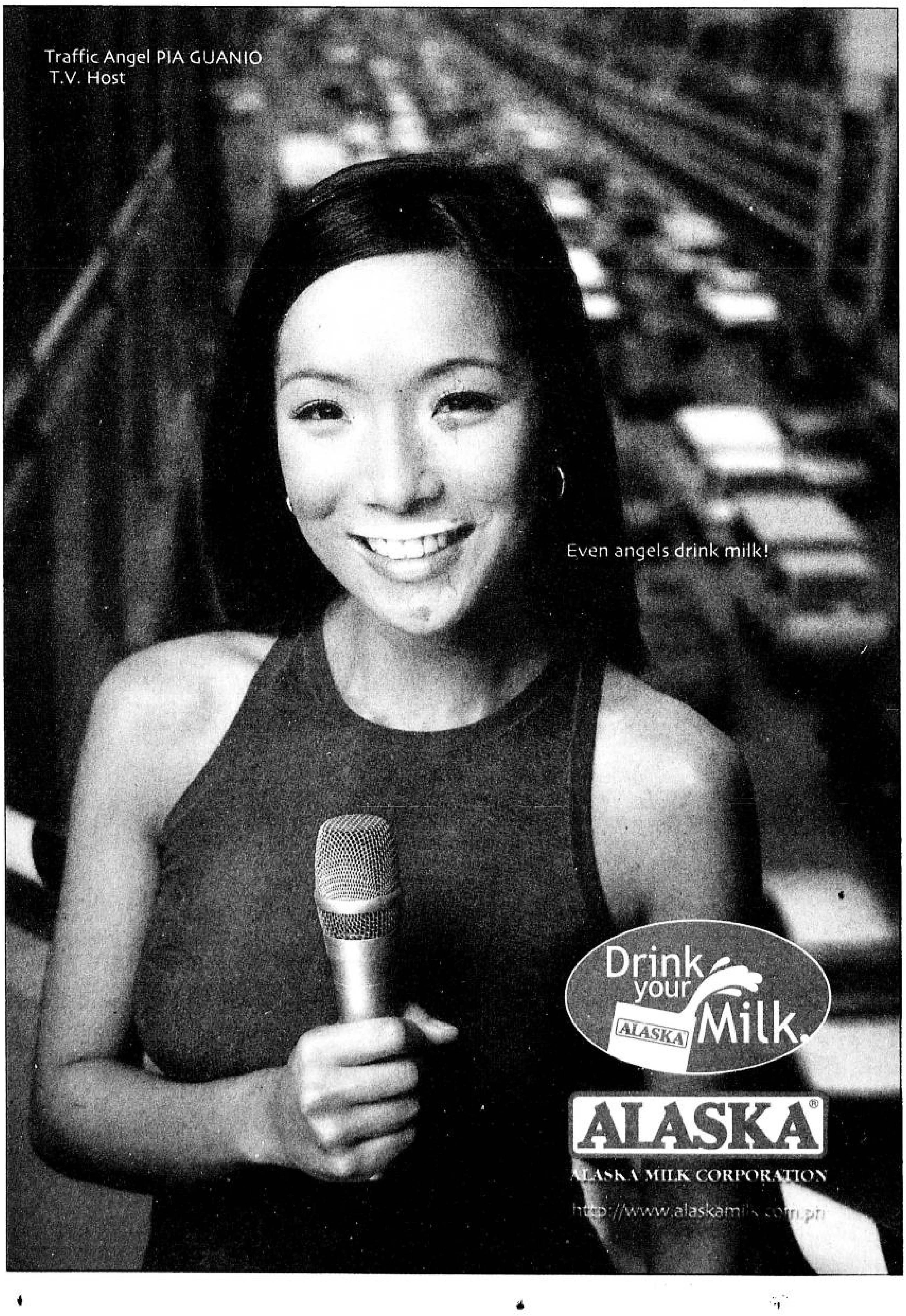
Cacnio's healthy attitude has won recognition and patronage for him not only in the local market but also abroad. His works have been exhibited in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Florida and Los Angeles in the US and at the Fukuyama Museum in Hiroshima, Japan.

Singapore-bound

Next month, Cacnio joins painter Fatima Belleza and watercolorist Alfred Galura in a three-person show dubbed "Lipad Sining" at the Marina Mandarin Hotel in Singapore. The show is organized by Gallery Nine and the Singapore-based Filipino Ladies Group (FlaG), an organization of Filipina professionals in the island state. The exhibit opens on September 8 and coincides with the induction ceremonies of FlaG's new batch of officers. Among Cacnio's works, which will be featured in the show, are "Dunk," "Dalag," "Gintong Aral" and "Kite Fliers."

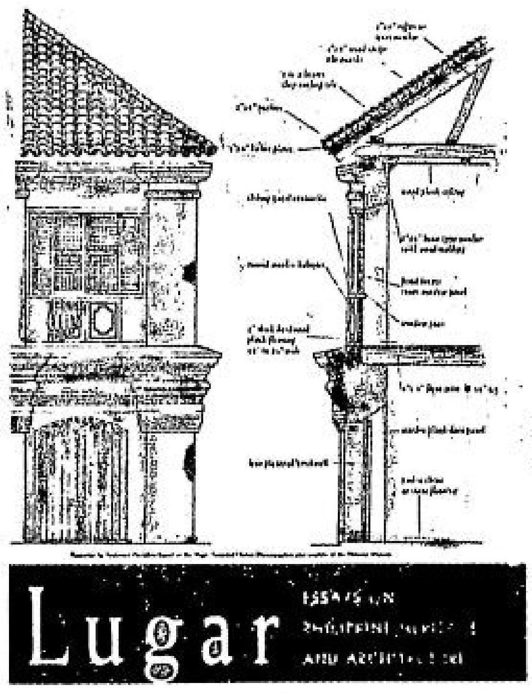
Cacnio is also slated to stage a two-man show alongside his best friend, digital artist Gerry Santos in December and another show at the Philippine Consulate Office in New York next year.

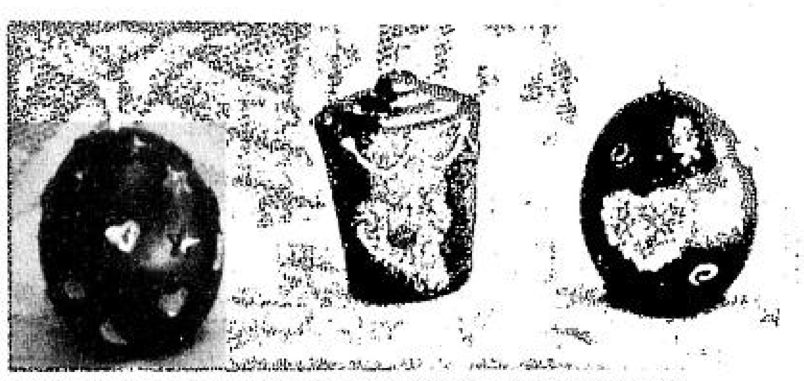
Michael Cacnio's sculptures are on view at the Shangri-La Plaza's Gallery 828, Rockwell's Lopez Museum and Bel-Air's Gallery Nine. Call 899-2704.



BOOK BY VILLALON

Architect and heritage writer Augusto F. Villalon will launch on Sept. 2, "Lugar: Essays of Philippine Heritage and Architecture," at 5 p.m. at the Megatrade Hall of the SM Megamall. Illustrated by Ferdinand Doctolero and published by Bookmark, the book is the highlight of Bookmark's participation in the 12th Philippine Bookfair.





CANDLE AND DECORATIVE ARTS WORKSHOP

Industrial artist and painter Victor Bella is holding another round of his well-known weekend arts course, "Arts Inspiration Series for Fun, Gift-giving and Profit." Courses include artistic candle-making, decorative painting on glass, figurine making, nature painting in acrylic, silicone rubber mold making and flower sculpture. Bella, a graduate of the Maastricht Academy of Visual Arts, also offers tutorials. Call 890-3778 or (0917) 757-6690.

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Warm welcome to ambassadorial spouses

DIPLOMATIC SWIRL

Amiga

THE METRO Manila Council of Women Balikatan Movement recently hosted a *bienvenida* musical in honor of the spouses of newly arrived ambassadors at the Manila Polo Club. Enjoying the get-together were Balikatan acting secretary Inday Patajo, Balikatan chair Leonarda Camacho, Clara Colesanti, wife of Italian Ambassador Humberto Colesanti; Mariana Hubbard, wife of Mexican Ambassador Enrique Hubbard; Irmgard Krepela, wife of Ambassador Christian Krepela of Austria; Micheline Jess, wife of German Ambassador Herbert Jess; Jan Baker, wife of New Zealand Ambassador Terry Baker, and Cir Paje, Balikatan treasurer.

SEATED, from left, Ambassador Carmen Lynam, Alice Buckley, Kessara Arnold, Irmgard Krepela, Clara Colesanti, Nahar Farooq; standing, Tessie Luz, Mariana Hubbard, Leonarda Camacho, Nini Licaros, Inday Patajo and Tereret Liboro

WANG Suoxiu and her interpreter

CHILEAN Ambassador Carmen Lynam and her mother Nora, Kessara Arnold and Narda Camacho

PHOTOS: BETOY JOHNSON

NORI Ongsiako, Narda Camacho and Mariana Hubbard, wife of Mexican the ambassador

EVIE Costa and Fortune Ledesma

JAN Baker of New Zealand and Paz Yuchengco

NAHAR Farooq, wife of Bangladesh Ambassador Mohammad Farooq, and Sonya Mathay

NESTOR Mata, Clara Colesanti, wife of the Italian envoy, singing "O Sole Mio."

An institute for arts and culture management

BY JEANNIE E. JAVELOSA

THE CULTURE scene owes much of its dynamism to two things: first, artists who produce a variety of artistic expressions, and second, organizations and agencies that support these artistic expressions. There has been a rise in the number of artists groups and organizations in the past two decades. With this rise comes the growing need for the professionalization of cultural workers to help create structures for the often unstructured artistic temperaments of creative people.

In the recent past, a cultural organization was often organized and run by artists themselves who used whatever management or marketing skills they could muster. Most of these skills were learned through experience.

NCCA chair Jaime C. Laya

To be a cultural manager requires a unique temperament. One has to first understand the creative and artistic spirit and believe in it. Then, one needs to be somewhat of a superman or woman—with knowledge of logistics, operations, human resource management, lobbying and public relations, not to mention marketing. Sometimes, the manager is also a practicing artist. The challenge is great and the financial returns minimal. One really has to love culture and the arts to justify all the work done to bring arts and culture closer to the public's awareness and appreciation.

It was only in the last decade that cultural management courses started to be offered at the University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas and De La Salle University. The slow but steady professionalization of the culture scene has been a process that promises a new breed of cultural managers. The most recent and welcome addition to the scene is the formation of the Institute of Cultural and Arts Management or Icam. As a pioneering and educational program of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the Icam is being set up by cultural workers who want to share their experiences with those interested to learn how to manage art and culture organizations and institutions.

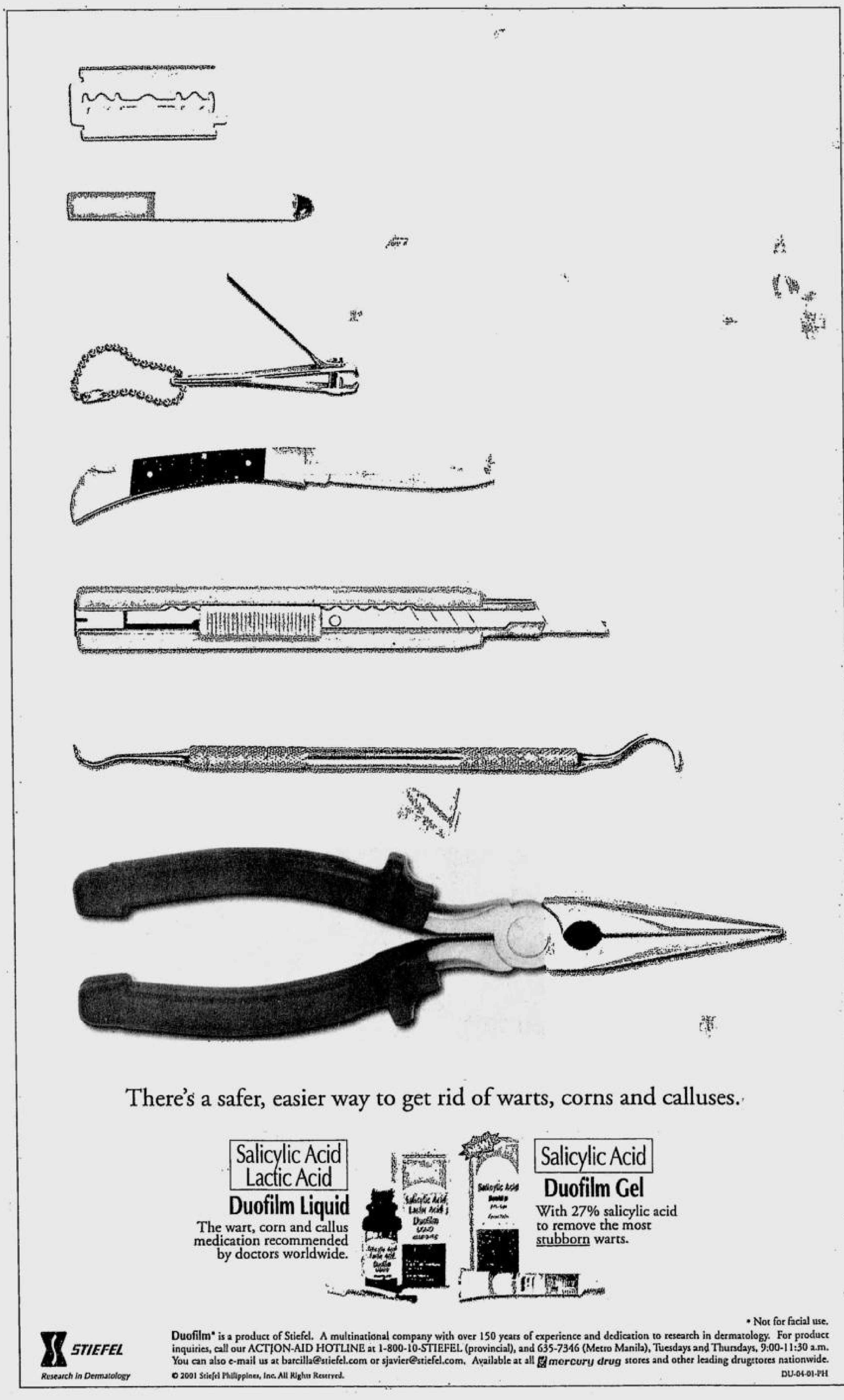
Starting September, Icam opens its doors with special five-day intensive courses specifically geared for cultural workers and managers, art management teachers, cultural officers of local government units or private corporations, regional tourism officers and cultural attachés. The courses focus on various aspects of culture and arts management. The course on finance management in arts organization will study financial management information system, accounting principles and financial analysis. The project management course hopes to develop skills in planning and organizing art organizations, while studying aspects of arts management within the Philippine context.

Culture is one the major pillars in the development of a nation. This has been the battle cry of cultural workers and practitioners. Yet sadly, the fact remains that culture is always relegated to the periphery. Cultural workers themselves who are not united and organized aggravate the situation. A special course entitled cultural policies and governance will give insights on the organization and structure of culture and arts, the important laws pertinent to the sector, and cultural policies and advocacy strategies.

The Icam also seeks to present an overview of culture and development within the Philippine context. It also provides case studies, from the preparation of a small exhibit or theater performance in the region, all the way to lobbying in Congress and managing international art festivals.

At present, the courses are nondegree. However, the NCCA is working on the accreditation of the courses by the Civil Service Commission and the Commission on Higher Education. Scholarships are available. Icam's presence in the scene promises a new breed of cultural workers and managers that will professionally and systematically work to help bring culture and the arts to the mainstream of public consciousness.

Application is ongoing. Call 527-21-92 local 726 or visit www.ncca.gov.ph



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Showcase for the watercolorist's virtuosity

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE PROMENADE on the fourth floor of the SM Megamall is usually uninhabited. This is where the art galleries and the fine-dining restaurants are located—not the usual hangouts of mallrats.

Last month, however, the place attracted a crowd of mostly young people day after day. That was the three weeks when Gallery Genesis held an exhibit of the entries in the 18th Kulay sa Tubig Annual Invitational Watercolor Competition.

For almost two decades now, this competition has become a showcase for an artist's virtuosity. Because the art of watercolor demands a kind of virtuosity even more rigorous than that applied when doing oil, acrylic, pastel or charcoal.

It is a fragile medium using a hard technique. Once the color stains the paper, it cannot be erased. And the nature of water renders each stroke difficult to control.

One's skill is tested particularly if one is trying to achieve that magical realism that duplicates photography, such as in the delicate tracery of the fabrics in Araceli Dans' pieces, or in the hyperrealistic details in Jimmy Vista's still lifes.

Magical realism was prominent in this year's Kulay sa Tubig show, so that at first glance a viewer might mistake it for a photo exhibit. The eyes were tricked not only by those minute details but also by the interplay of light and shadow.

Spray of colors

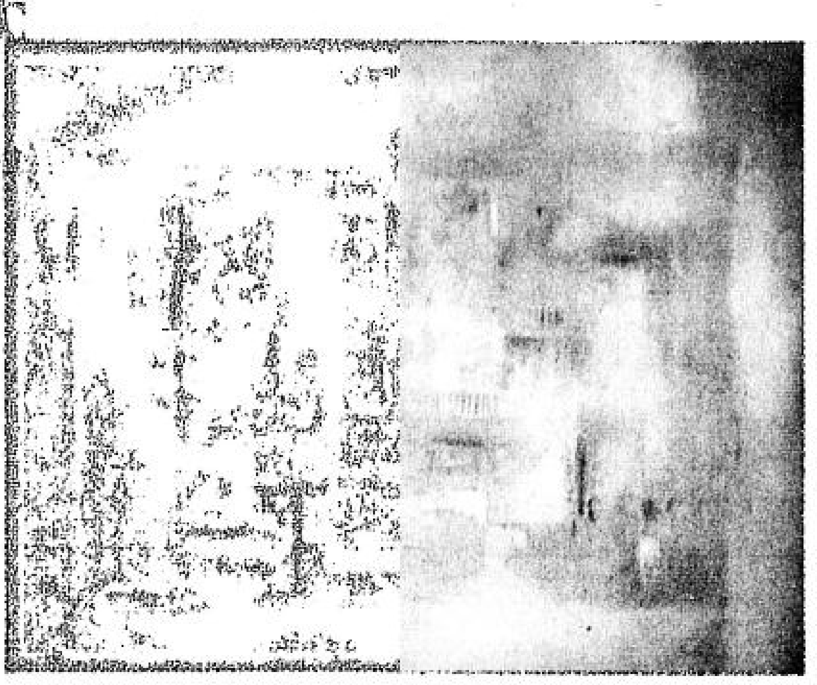
The range of styles, however, was quite varied, with the medium employed and the technique explored to the possible limits. Side by side with the trompe l'oeil were the washes of abstraction.

Most of the winning artists had two winning pieces. Among the runners-up, Jun Martinez had two. "The Last Katipunero," 21" x 28½", done in washes of brown, black and olive-green, depicts an old man with a *katipunero* hat reading a newspaper to a boy on a park bench. "Reading," of the same size and coloration, has two girls reading apparently in the same park and on a similar bench. The pieces look like book illustrations.

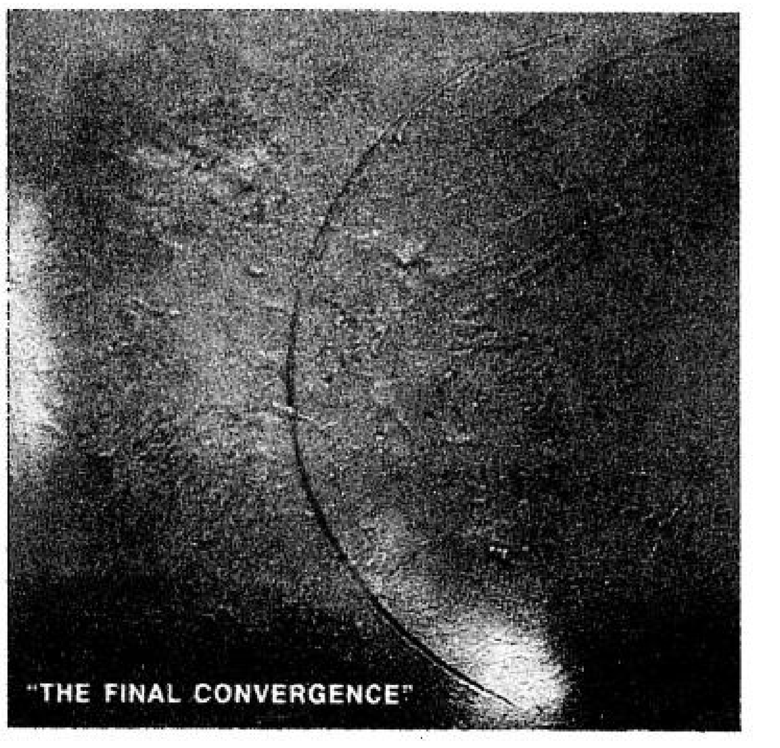
Jonah Salvosa also had two runners-up. "Dalaw ng Daranak," 36" x 27", is a spray of magenta, blue, green, violet and white in the froth and bubbles of the waterfall and in the beads and clothing of a native maiden fluting in the jungle. "Pinay," 30" x 30", is a burst of pink, orange, yellow, green in the intricate tattoo on the face and in the stripes on the pants of another native maiden. At a distance, the pieces look like psychedelic posters.

Chris Mirang employed interesting perspectives, in the cropping of one image and in the cinematic angle of another. "Boracay," 30" x 22", shows only the tip of a *banca*'s orange stern and part of a yellow outrigger, then green ripples of the sea and circles of light on the water, like lotus leaves. "Cat on the Tree," same size, plays with light and shadow in the blue eyes, white fur and translucent pink ears of a cat on the crotch of a tree.

Mario Panis' "Summer Frolic," 30" x 40", a beach scene of anchored boats and seven kids diving and swimming, is carefully composed with the crisscrossing of lateral lines of ripples, bamboo poles, boats and bodies, then rendered in green, brown, blue, with bright dashes of red, yellow and orange. "Kois," same size, is an underwater scene of fish spotted with gold, black, white, red, the water current captured in wisps of gray and by the light in the ripples on ink-blue.



"BLUE CITY"



"THE FINAL CONVERGENCE"

Rural still life

Agapito Ganzon's "Buklod," 30" x 40", a close-up of eight sticks of glistening pork BBQ grilled over glowing charcoal, had some viewers gasp at its hyperrealism. "Vegetables and Spices," 21½" x 29½", is a lovely rural still life of woven tray and basket filled with flame-red bell pepper, violet-brown banana heart, green cabbage and spring onion, the laterals of shadows, wooden plank, banana-leaf ribs and basket weave mirroring one another.

Among the winners was Salvador Convocar's "Celestial City," 32" x 22", showing green peaks and the partial orb of an orange sun on a wash of orange and yellow, employing transparent cubism.

The rest of the winners, as with the runners-up, came by twos. Ernesto Patricio's "City Smog at Freak Babies," 38" x 28", is streaks of white, green, violet, yellow, with the city rendered almost abstract by the thickening smog. "45,000 Biktima ni Magayon," 22" x 30", is a violet blur of people fleeing on the foreground with the yellow and orange wash of volcanic eruption prominent on the background.

Billy Pomida's "Torch Parade," 21" x 29", shows a row of *bandera Española* plants standing rigidly like sentinels, with the budding red flowers on long green stalks looking, indeed, like flames. "Saba," 18" x 23½", has a close-up of banana fruits, mostly green with a few ripening into yellow, filling up the frame.

Unusual pieces

Aldric Acosta's "Playing Lights in Green I," 30" x 40", is an intricate web of violet *alugbate* vines with dark-green leaves, with one leaf insect-eaten, and a large brown dead leaf of another plant at the center looking like a nest, or a bat sleeping upside down, if this were the crown of a tree. "Playing Lights in Green II," same size, is another intricate web of green translucent leaves and vines, with their ribs and veins fully displayed, and what looks like a figure peering behind a patch of brown. These two pieces are a triumph of chiaroscuro.

The most unusual were Egai Fernandez's "Signos I" and "Signos II," 21" x 29½", nighttime scenes of galvanized-iron rooftops and telephone poles, in gray, black and white, with watermarks deliberately dropped on the paper boards. They are virtually the same scene, except for the writings on the foreground: "Resign Now!" in the first piece and "Katarungan Para Kay Erap" in the second.

Sinister for the absence of people, these night scenes depict the mass actions in late January and late April when people deserted their homes to go to Edsa. What's unusual, however, is that there's no chromatic color here, there is an absence of hue, the artist having used only the negative colors black, white and gray.

A viewer might read the social comment but miss the aesthetic principle: These two pieces actually point back to the art's beginnings, when ancient Chinese scholar-painters used the technique for their calligraphic illustrations of black ink on white paper. With that, the art of watercolor has been pushed to its logical extreme.

Castillo at Gallery 139; Dela Cruz at Boston Gallery; San Pascual at the Finale Art Center

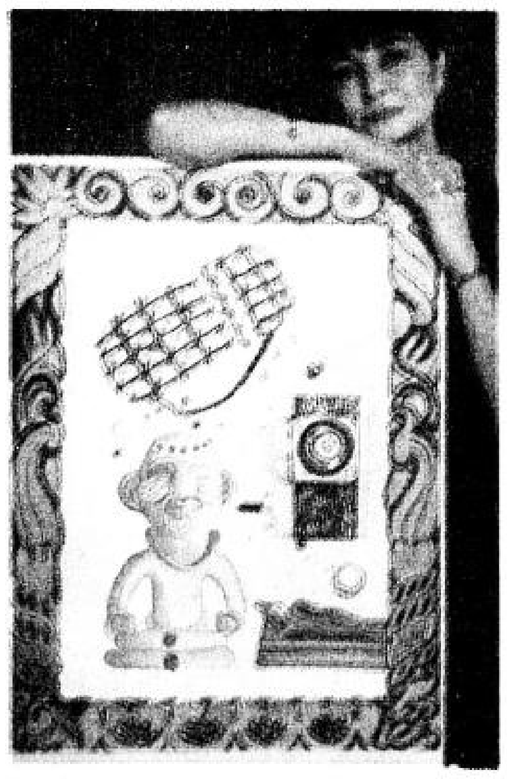
DANTE Castillo will mount his 14th solo exhibit featuring watercolor paintings on Aug. 31, at the Gallery 139, 3/L Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. The exhibit will run until Sept.12.

VISUAL ARTS

DELA CRUZ AT BOSTON GALLERY. Award-winning young artist Reynold dela Cruz will open his first one-man exhibit of new paintings dubbed "Bulahaw" (literally, any noise that disturbs peace)," at Boston Gallery, 72 Boston and Lantana Streets, Cubao, QC. The exhibit will run until Sept.18. Call 722-9205.

SAN PASCUAL AT THE FINALE. Popo San Pascual mounts his one-man exhibit dubbed "Class Pictures" at Finale Art Gallery, 4/L SM Megamall, Building A, Mandaluyong City until Sept. 2.

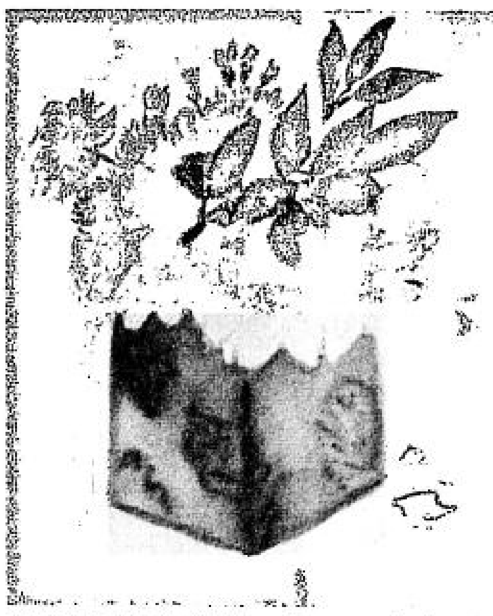
SOLER AT GENLUNA GALLERY. Soler will mount his latest exhibit dubbed "Selected Paintings," featuring works in oil and watercolor at the Genluna Gallery, 12 General Luna St., Davao City, on Aug.31- Sept. 10. Call (082) 226-2104.



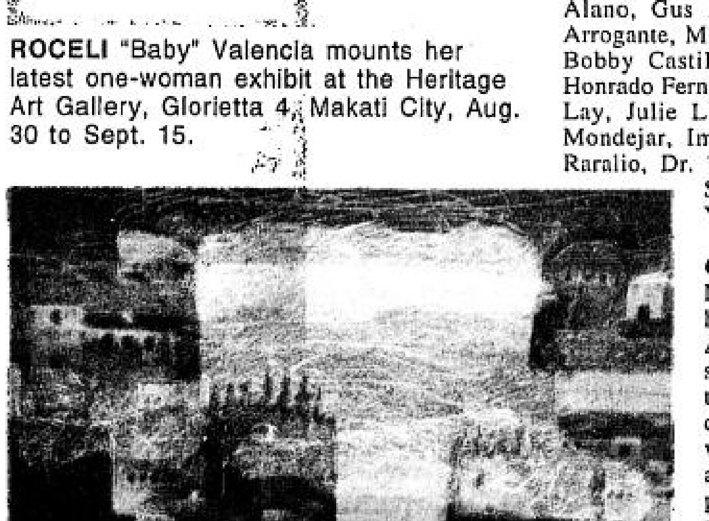
GARZON AT MADRIGAL

Cristina Garzon launches her latest one-woman show in two venues: her website (http://www.garzonprojects.com) created by Kalki Jimenez of Timebase Productions, and at the Madrigal Art Center on Commerce Avenue in Ayala Alabang. She presents online as well as in a gallery setting her personal series of still-life works in what she calls "an ode to small things."

The title of the new exhibit, "Inest Sua Gratia Parvis," is a Latin phrase of unknown origin that means "Even little things have their peculiar graces." The series consists of 15 new still-life watercolor works started in 1995. Each work is heavily bordered with detailed designs derived from ethnic patterns, and this edging encases a motley grouping of small artifacts and souvenirs playfully composed like a collage.



ROCELI "Baby" Valencia mounts her latest one-woman exhibit at the Heritage Art Gallery, Glorietta 4, Makati City, Aug. 30 to Sept. 15.



"COUNTRY PLEASURES" by Manuel Baldemor

BALDEMOR AT THE ART SPACE. Artist Manuel Baldemor mounts "Hungarian Treasures," a visual diary of his Hungarian trip, at the Art Space, 3/F Glorietta IV, Ayala Center, Makati City, until Aug. 31. Baldemor's visit included a successful solo exhibit at the famous Nagyhazi Galeria, held in connection with the Philippine Independence Day celebration in Budapest.

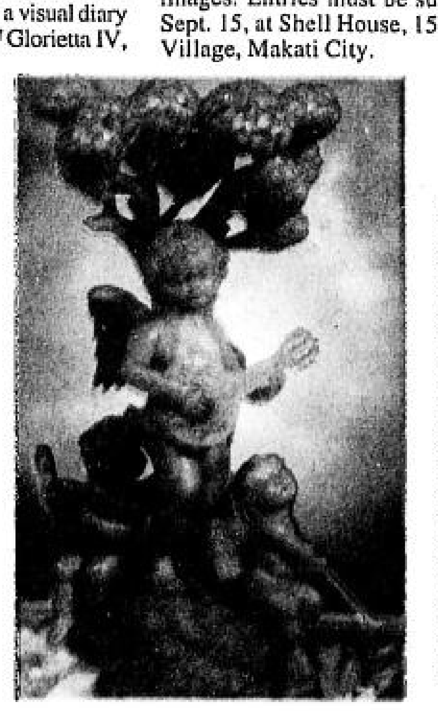
SANTOS AT THE FINALE. Mona Lisa Reyes Santos mounts her fifth one-woman show "Blooms," until Sept. 11, at the Finale Art File, LaO Centre corner Pasay Road and Makati Avenue, Makati City. On view are huge canvases, filled with larger-than-life flowers, an antithesis to the usually delicate floral still-life.

GONZALES AT GALERIE Y. Rudolf Gonzales will open his one-man exhibit on Sept. 1, at Galerie Y, Glorietta 4, Makati City. The exhibit will run until Sept. 11. Rudolf is known internationally for his Hawaiian seascapes and still-lifes. Call 247-6789, 242-5399

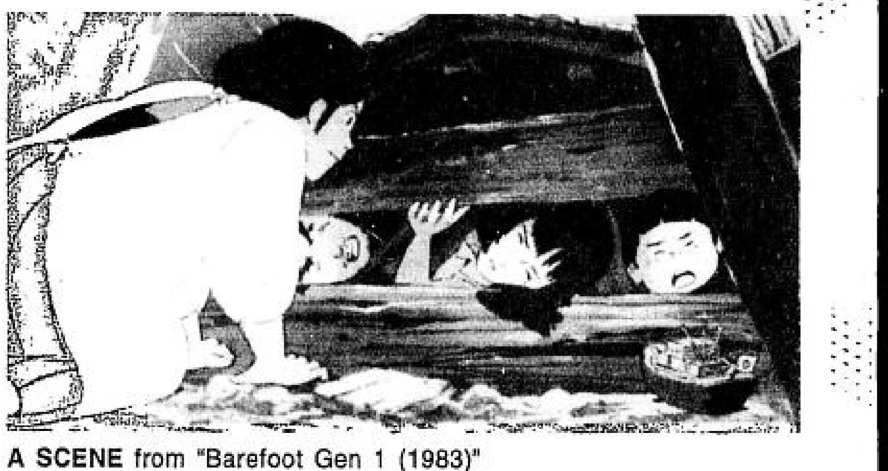
GROUP EXHIBIT AT ART CENTER. "Cool Pieties," an exhibit of paintings, sculptures, mixed-media works, photographs, video and installations by 30 under-30 young artists, are on view at the 4/L SM Art Center, Megamall Artwalk, Mandaluyong City. Participating artists include Ronald Anading, Mafe Baloyos, Ringo Bunoan, Butas Karayom, Jonathan Ching, Mariano Ching, Lena Cobangbang, Ernest Concepcion, Louie Cordero, Emil Dimar, Dada Docot, Len Familara, Lyra Abueg Garcellano, Nona Garcia, Geraldine Javier, Kim Landicho, Riza Manalo, Manny Migriño, Katrina Miranda, Mike Munoz, Jayson Oliveria, Gary-Ross Pastrana, Ikoy Ricio, Brian Sergio, Yasmin Sison, Kreskin Sugay, Wire Tuazon, Alvin Villaruel, M M Yu and Alvin Zafra. The exhibit will run until Sept. 8.

GROUP EXHIBIT AT INTER-CON. Hotel Inter-Continental Manila's Art Café presents "Sculptures 2.2," a 22-piece exhibit featuring the works of 22 celebrated artists namely Jecky Alano, Gus Albor, Johnny Alcazaren, Ral Arrogante, Michael Cacnio, Robert Casalmer, Bobby Castillo, Allan Cosio, Henri Eteve, Honrado Fernandez, Dei Jardiniano, Ting Ping Lay, Julie Lluch, Pablo Mahinay, Antonio Mondejar, Impy Pilapil, Alma Quinto, Dan Raralio, Dr. Ton Raymundo, Claude Tayag, Sandra Torrijos and Mac Valdezco.

COMPETITION. The 34th Shell National Students Art Competition has opened the Epson Digital Fine Arts category to all Filipino college students. The new category is on top of the three traditional categories: oil and acrylic, watercolor, and sculpture. At stake are P100,000 worth of Epson products including printers, scanners and digital cameras. Interested participants may submit entries in CD-ROM format accompanied by an A-4 reproduction printed either on photo or inkjet paper. The CD-ROM should contain all original working files used in composing the entry, including unflattened "psd" files, fonts and raw files such as scanned images. Entries must be submitted on or before Sept. 15, at Shell House, 156 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City.



"HIMIG NG MGA ANGHEL" by Wel Bagayana is part of the exhibit dubbed "Sagitsit ng Hukob...Haplos ng Pinsel..." The exhibit runs until Sept. 20 at Galeria de las Islas, 3/F Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. Call 527-2113.



A SCENE from "Barefoot Gen 1 (1983)"

Animé festival at Shangri-La Plaza

THE COUNTRY'S first Nihon Eigá Sai 2001: Animé on Parade goes to Shangri-La Plaza Mall at the Cinema 2 from Aug. 31 to Sept. 4. Animé fans will surely love the festival's mall lineup that will showcase four decades of Japanese full-length animation greats, ranging from Talji Yabushita's "The White Snake"(1958), the first Japanese full-length colored animation which won him the Grand Prix in the Venice Film Festival, to Katsuhiro Otomo's "Akira" (1988), hailed as one of Japan's most expensive animation films. ("Akira" cost a billion yen to produce its 2,212 shots, 160,000 cells and 327 colors, employing hundreds of animators, inkers, colorists and other film technicians).

Exclusive to Shangri-La Plaza is the screening of the award-winning "Tombstone for Fireflies" (Aug. 31 and Sept. 2 at 8:30 p.m.). Produced in 1988, it tells the story (through flashbacks) of two children (14 year-old Boy Seita and his 4-year-old sister Setsuko) from Kobe made orphans by the World War II. It portrays their struggle to survive in a society that has broken down under the horrors of war, a struggle doomed to fail in the end. Directed by Isao Takahata, who is associated with the famous Ghibli Studio (source of the great Japanese animation), the film is based on a semi-autobiographical novel by Ariyuki Nosaka who was a young lad at the time of the firebombs, whose sister died of hunger and whose life has been shadowed by guilt.

"Tombstone" received two top awards at the 1994 Chicago International Children's Film Festival. It garnered first prize in the Rights of the Child category and first place in Best Animated Feature Film category. Independent filmmaker and co-editor of "Senses of Cinema," Bill Mousoulis, say "Tombstone" is "a masterpiece not only because of its richness of rendering but also because of its overall form... it's a film about death, but the film itself resonates with life." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun Times agreed. "It is a powerful dramatic film that happens to be animated... It is the most profoundly human animated film I've ever even."

Nihon Eiga Sai 2001: Animé on Parade at the Shangri-La Plaza is presented jointly with the Japan Foundation Manila Office, with Tokyo Tokyo and AV Driver. Other equally-interesting films to be featured are "The White Snake" (1958), "The Orphan Brother" (1961) and "Madcap Island" (1967) by Taiji Yabushita (famous for his "Adventures of Little Samurai"); "Return of Pero" (1972) by Tomoharu Katsumata; "Taro, the Dragon Boy" (1979) by Kirio Urayama; "Barefoot Gen 1" (1983) by Mori Masaki; "Night on the Galactic Railroad" (1985) by Gisaburoh Sugli; "Barefoot Gen 2" (1986) and "Grimm's Fairy Tales" (1987) by Toshio Hirata; and "Akira" (1988) by Katsuhiro Otomo.

Admission is free. Screening hours are 3:30, 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. Call 633-7851, local 106.

Back-to-back with the filmfest, in line with Shangri-La Plaza Mall's ongoing art and culture advocacy, is a weekend treat for kids where they can enjoy and learn more about Japanese art and culture at the mall. On Sept. 1 and 2, prior to the first screening, there will be storytelling seasons of well-loved Japanese tales by the Japan Foundation Storytellers at the Cinema 2 lobby; Origami session for kids ages 7-15 with Japanese Origami teachers on 6/L (near Circa shop) and face-painting sessions for children 3-10 years with face painter Ed Ordono on 5/L (Ripley's Museum Exit). Registration is set on Sept. 1 and 2. Call 633-7851, local 107.

'AI' advance screening tonight

103.5 K-lite and Warner Bros., with CyberPress, will hold an advance screening of "Artificial Intelligence (AI)" from award-winning director Steven Spielberg tonight at 7 p.m. at SM Megamall Cinema 1, Mandaluyong City.

"AI," which stars Haley Joel Osment ("The Sixth Sense"), Jude Law ("Gatacca," "The Talented Mr. Ripley") and William Hurt ("Dark City"), is set in the distant future, after the polar icecaps had melted, triggering floods and devastating major cities. The world is now run by robots with highly sophisticated artificial intelligence. In the midst of it all stands one boy and a robotic teddy bear who long for something more beyond the metal framing and integrated circuitry.

CyberPress, a national organization of information technology (IT) journalists, will be handing out gift items to lucky early ticketholders at the lobby. There will also be a raffle inside the theater. The giveaways are from world-class IT companies like Cisco Systems, EMC Corporation, Veritas Software, Anixter, Great Plains, Ban Bros Commercial, Sun Microsystems and Microsoft.

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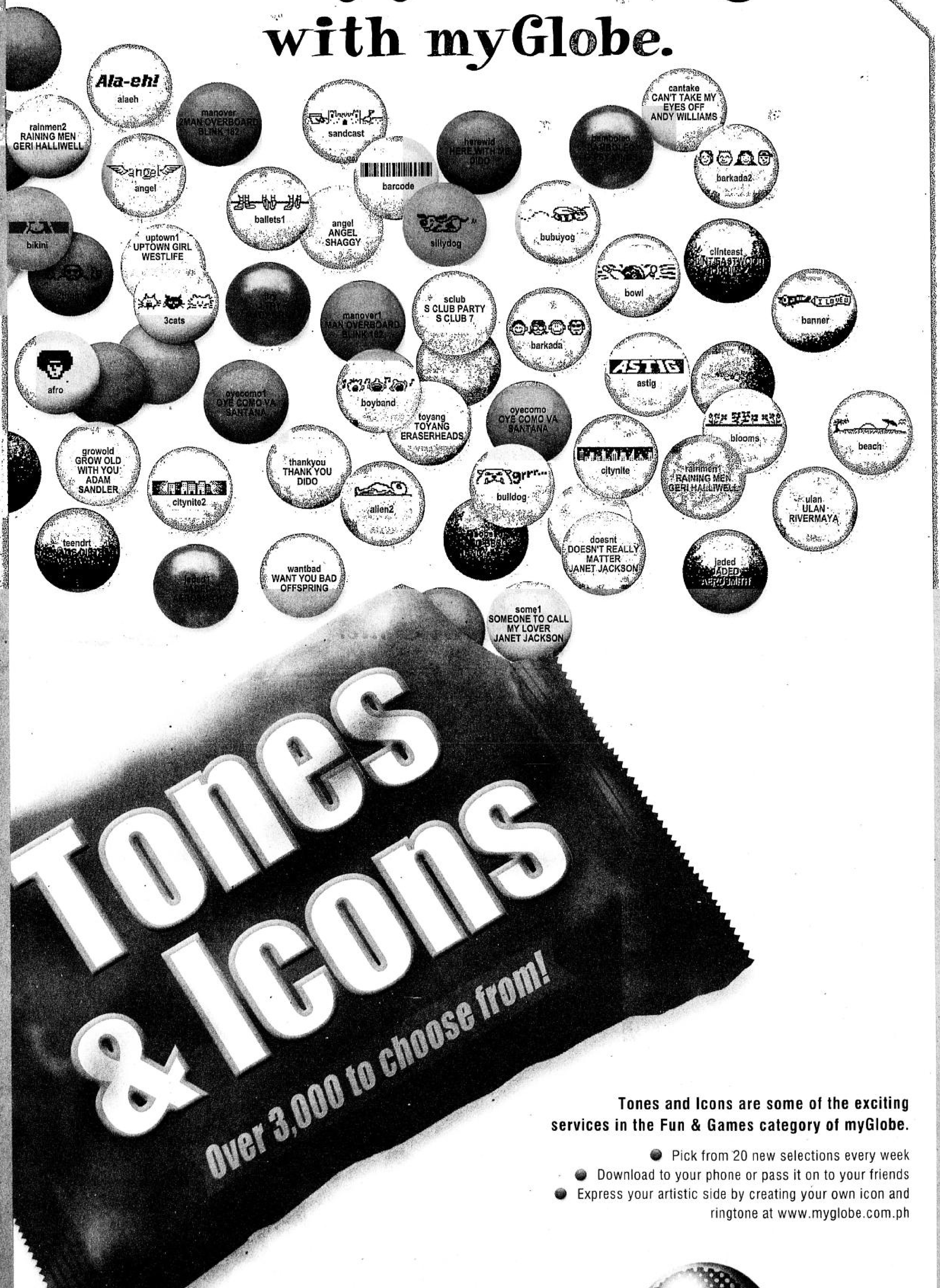
Ala-eh!
alaeh
rainmen2
RAINING MEN
GERI HALLIWELL
manover
2MAN OVERBOARD
BLINK 182
sandcast
herewid
HERE WITH ME
DIDO
cantake
CAN'T TAKE MY
EYES OFF
ANDY WILLIAMS
angel
angel
barcode
barkada2
ballets1
angel
ANGEL
SHAGGY
sillydog
bubuyog
bikini
uptown1
UPTOWN GIRL
WESTLIFE
clinteast
bowl
3cats
manover1
MAN OVERBOARD
BLINK 182
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barkada
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OYE COMO VA
SANTANA
boyband
ASTIG
astig
toyang
TOYANG
ERASERHEADS
oyecomo
OYE COMO VA
SANTANA
blooms
beach
growold
GROW OLD
WITH YOU
ADAM
SANDLER
citynite2
thankyou
THANK YOU
DIDO
alien2
grrr...
bulldog
citynite
rainmen1
RAINING MEN
GERI HALLIWELL
ulan
ULAN
RIVERMAYA
teendrt
doesnt
DOESN'T REALLY
MATTER
JANET JACKSON
jaded
JADED
AEROSMITH
wantbad
WANT YOU BAD
OFFSPRING
some1
SOMEONE TO CALL
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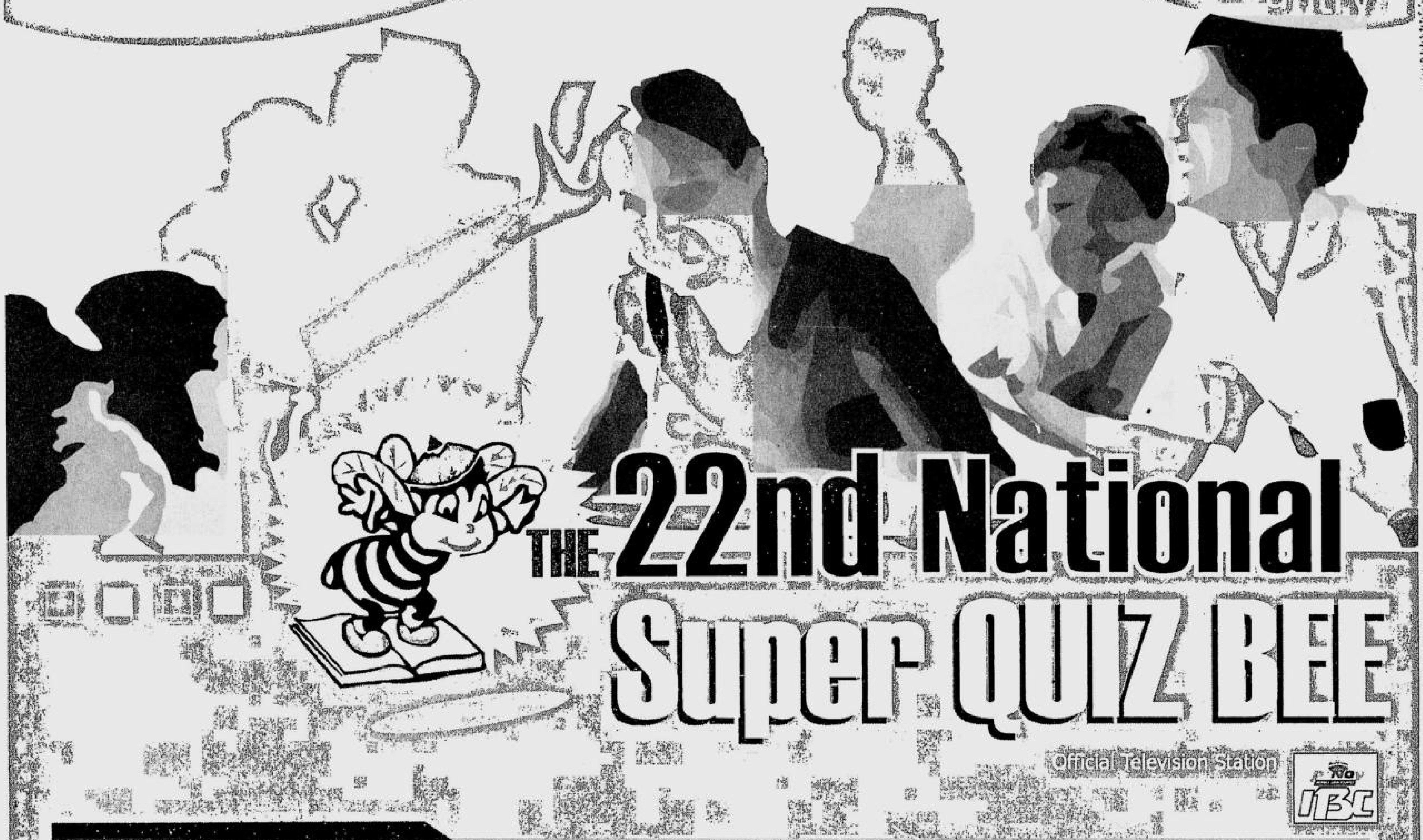

THE 22nd National Super QUIZ BEE

Official Television Station IBC

National Super Quiz Bee Nationwide Eliminations

The schedule of eliminations is as follows:

A. School Level	August 1 - 15, 2001	C. Division Level	September 1 - 31, 2001	E. Grand Finals	December 7, 2001
B. District Level	August 16 - 31, 2001	D. Regional Level	October 1 - 30, 2001		

NCR (Metro Manila) Super Quiz Bee Schedule of Competitions

Division Contest	**Competition Date**	**Venue**	**Telecast Dates**
	Sat. 1:30 - 5:30 p.m.		Sat. 1:30 - 2:30 pm Via IBC 13
Div. of Muntinlupa, Taguig, Pateros and Div. Of Paranaque, Las Pinas	Sept. 7	Alabang Town Center	Oct. 6 & 13
Div. of Quezon City and Div. of Makati City	Sept. 15	Ever Gotesco Commonwealth	Oct. 20 & 27
Div. of Manila and Div. of Pasay City	Sept. 29	SM City Manila	Nov. 3 & 10
Div. of Pasig, Marikina, San Juan and Div. Of Mandaluyong City	Oct. 13	Robinsons Galleria	Nov. 17 & 24
Div. of Caloocan City and Valenzuela, Malabon, Navotas	Oct. 27	SM City North Edsa	Dec. 1 & 8
Metro Manila Regional Finals	Nov. 10	Robinsons Place Manila	Dec. 15 & 22
NSQB Grand Finals	**Dec. 7**	**DAP Tagaytay**	**Dec. 26** **Primetime 7-9 pm**

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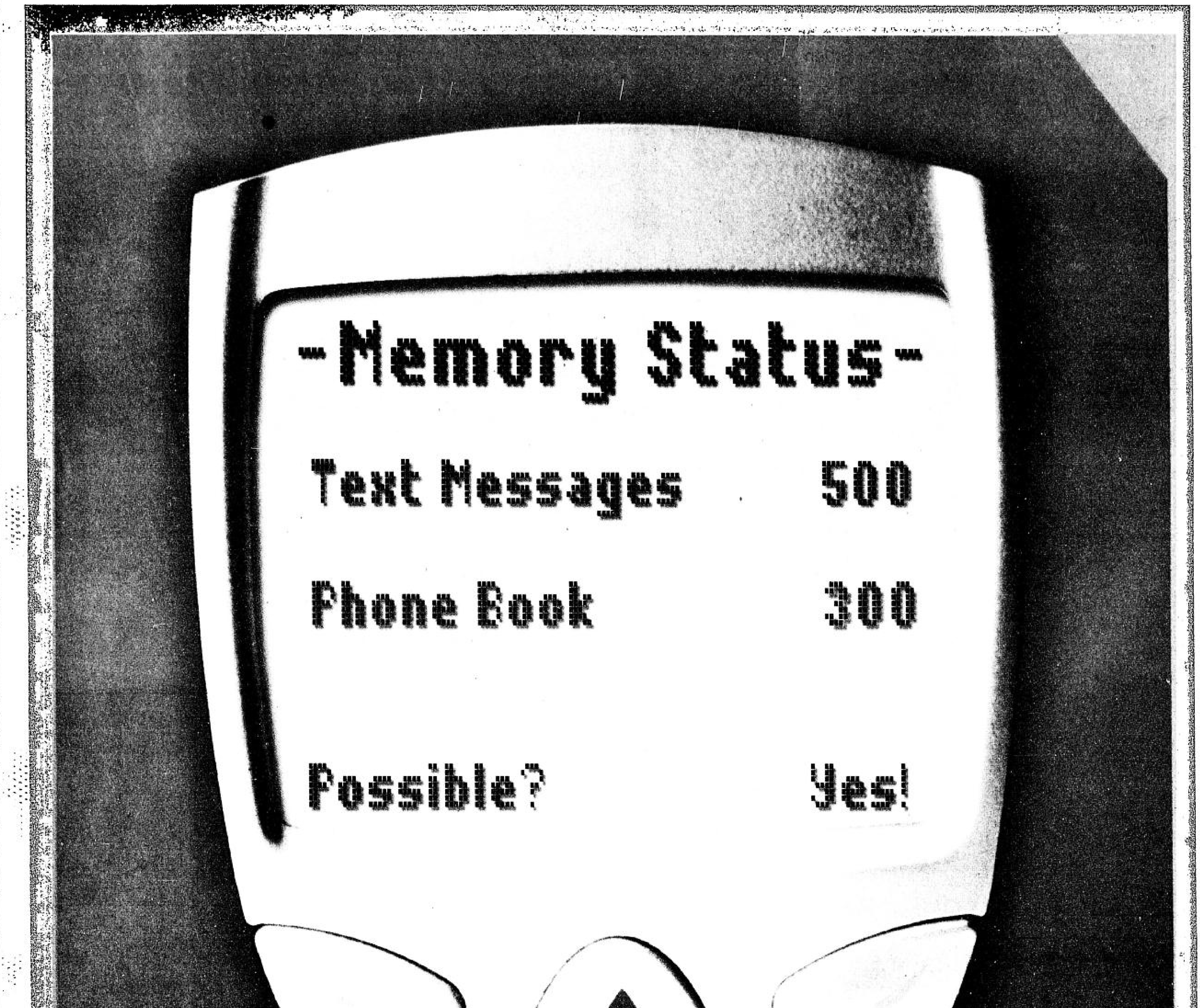
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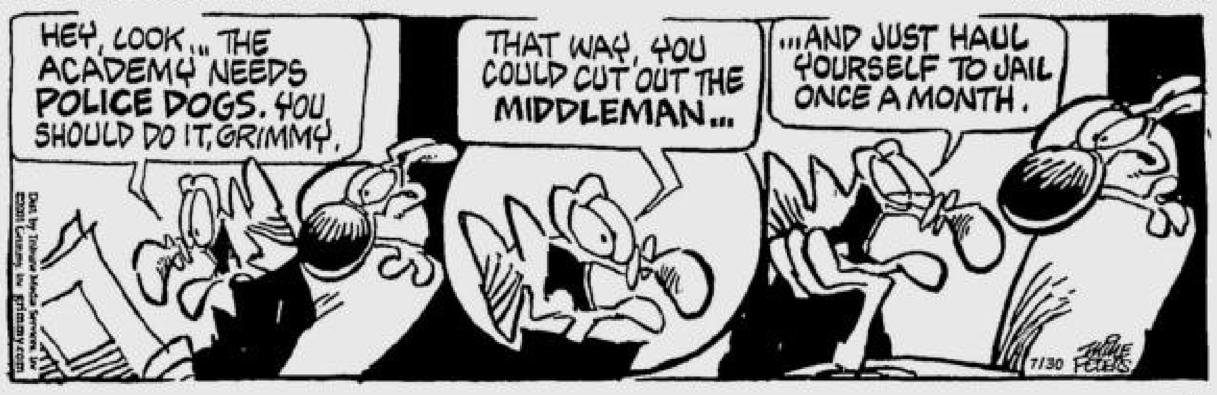
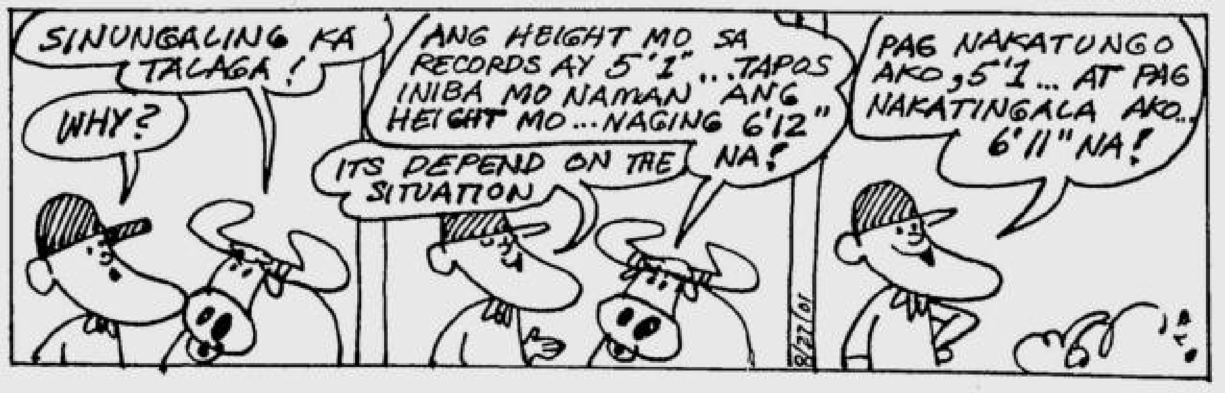
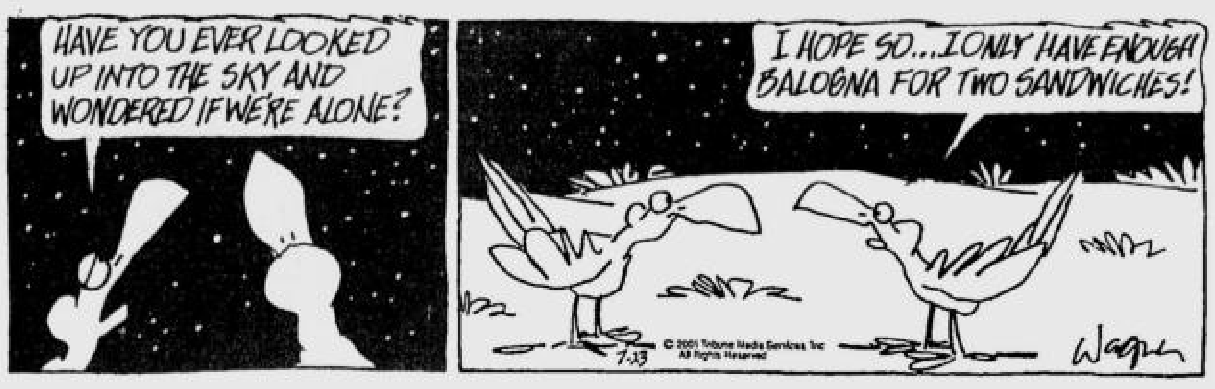
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


HEY, LOOK... THE ACADEMY NEEDS POLICE DOGS. YOU SHOULD DO IT, GRIMMY.
THAT WAY, YOU COULD CUT OUT THE MIDDLEMAN...
...AND JUST HAUL YOURSELF TO JAIL ONCE A MONTH.
7/30 MIKE PETERS

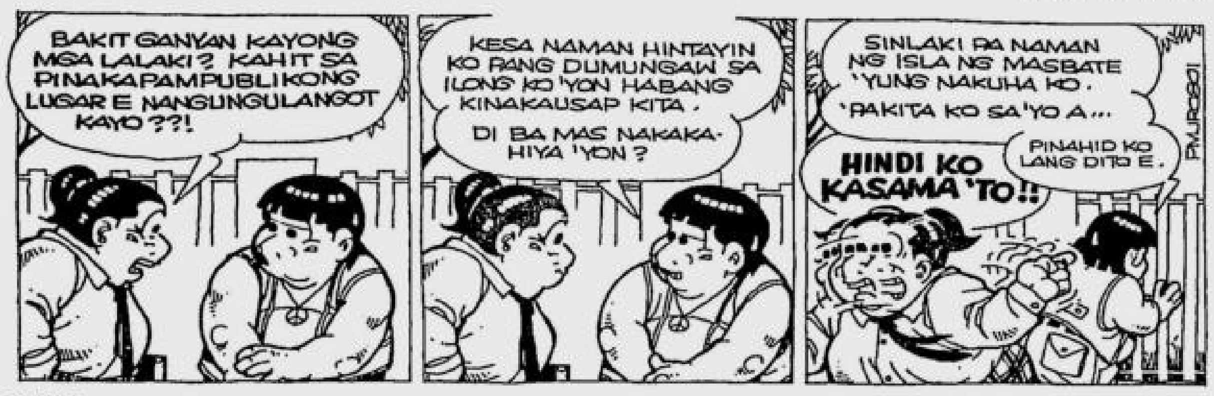
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


SINUNGALING KA TALAGA!
WHY?
ANG HEIGHT MO SA RECORDS AY 5'1"...TAPOS INIBA MO NAMAN ANG HEIGHT MO...NAGING 6'12" NA!
ITS DEPEND ON THE SITUATION
PAG NAKATUNGO AKO, 5'1... AT PAG NAKATINGALA AKO.. 6'11" NA!
8/27/01

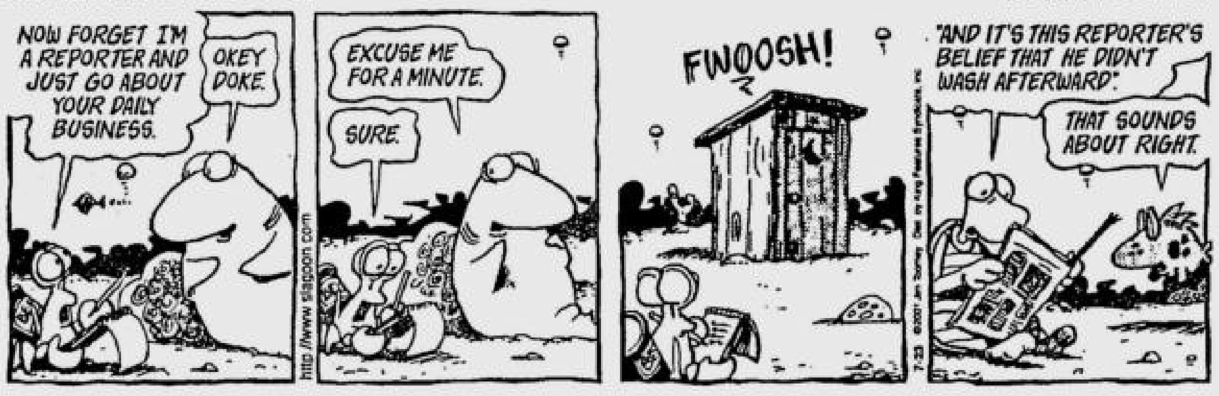
ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED UP INTO THE SKY AND WONDERED IF WE'RE ALONE?
I HOPE SO...I ONLY HAVE ENOUGH BALOGNA FOR TWO SANDWICHES!
© 2001 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved
7-13
Wagner

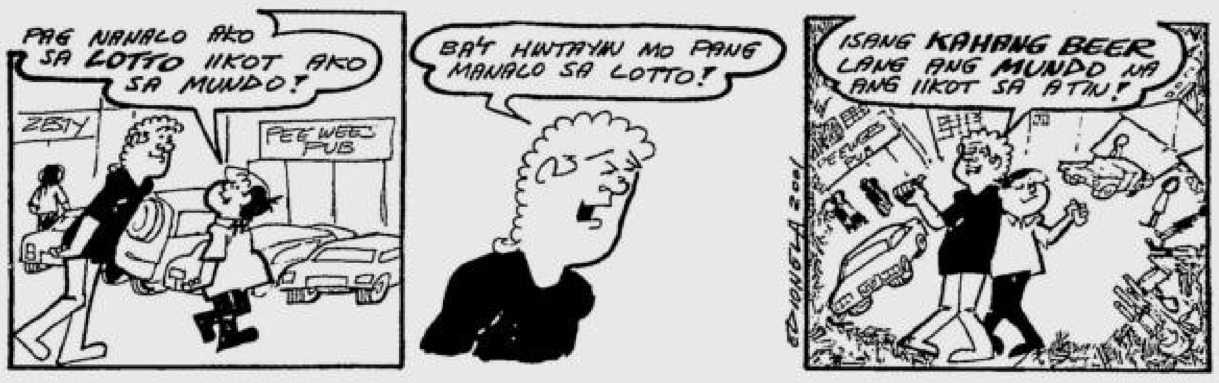
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT GANYAN KAYONG MGA LALAKI? KAHIT SA PINAKAPAMPUBLIKONG LUGAR E NANGUNGULANGOT KAYO??!
KESA NAMAN HINTAYIN KO PANG DUMUNGAW SA ILONG KO 'YON HABANG KINAKAUSAP KITA.
DI BA MAS NAKAKAHIYA 'YON?
SINLAKI PA NAMAN NG ISLA NG MASBATE 'YUNG NAKUHA KO. 'PAKITA KO SA'YO A...
HINDI KO KASAMA 'TO!!
PINAHID KO LANG DITO E.
PMJR0801

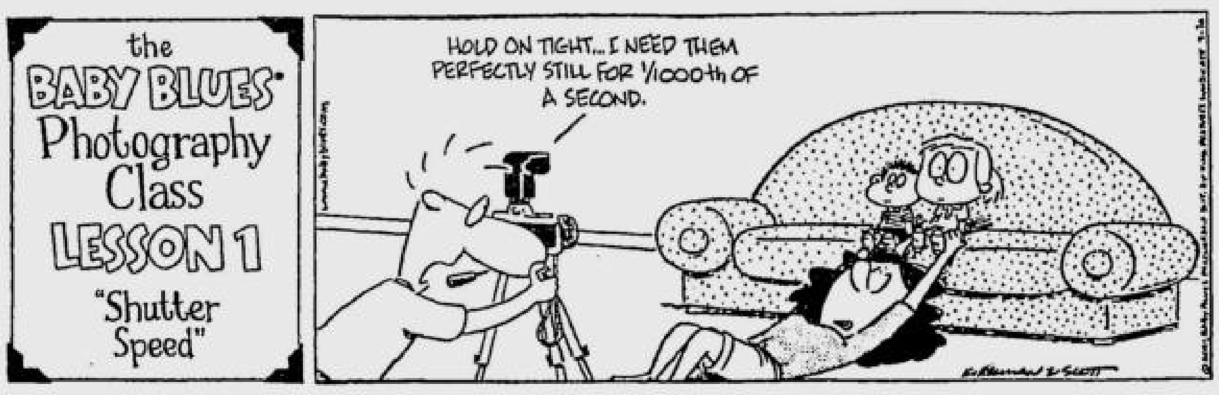
SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


NOW FORGET I'M A REPORTER AND JUST GO ABOUT YOUR DAILY BUSINESS.
OKEY DOKE.
EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE.
SURE.
http://www.slagoon.com
FWOOSH!
"AND IT'S THIS REPORTER'S BELIEF THAT HE DIDN'T WASH AFTERWARD".
THAT SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.
7-23

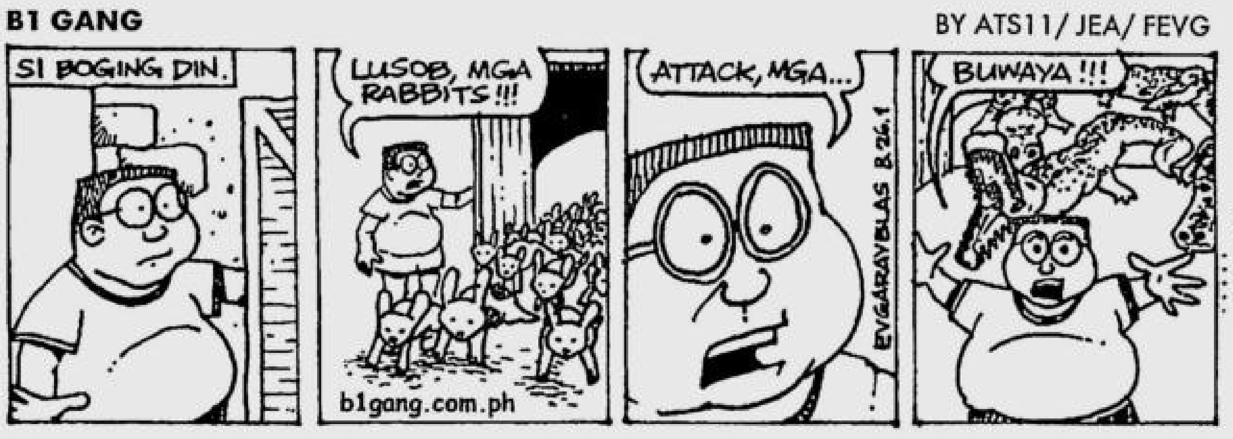
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


PAG NANALO AKO SA LOTTO IIKOT AKO SA MUNDO!
ZESTY
PEE WEE PUB
BA'T HINTAYIN MO PANG MANALO SA LOTTO!
ISANG KAHANG BEER LANG ANG MUNDO NA ANG IIKOT SA ATIN!
DIONELA 2001

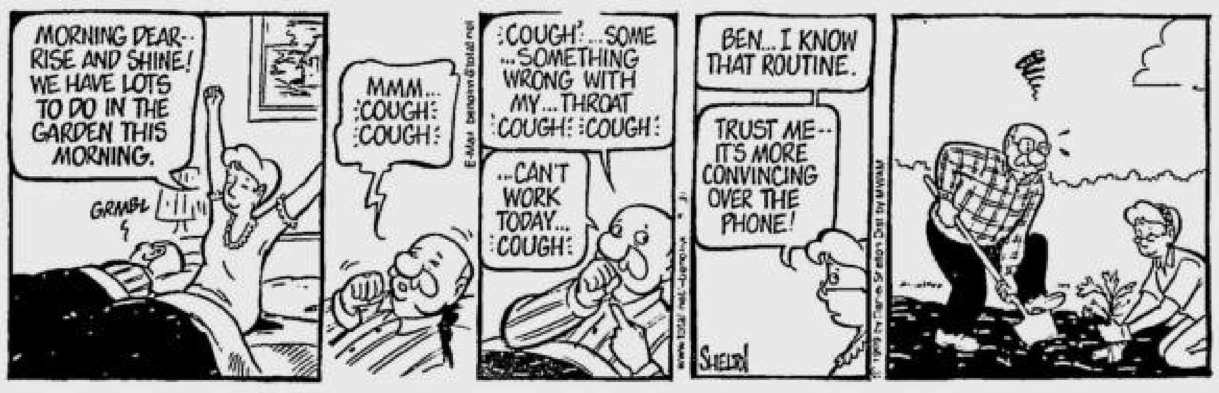
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


the BABY BLUES® Photography Class LESSON 1 "Shutter Speed"
HOLD ON TIGHT... I NEED THEM PERFECTLY STILL FOR 1/1000th OF A SECOND.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

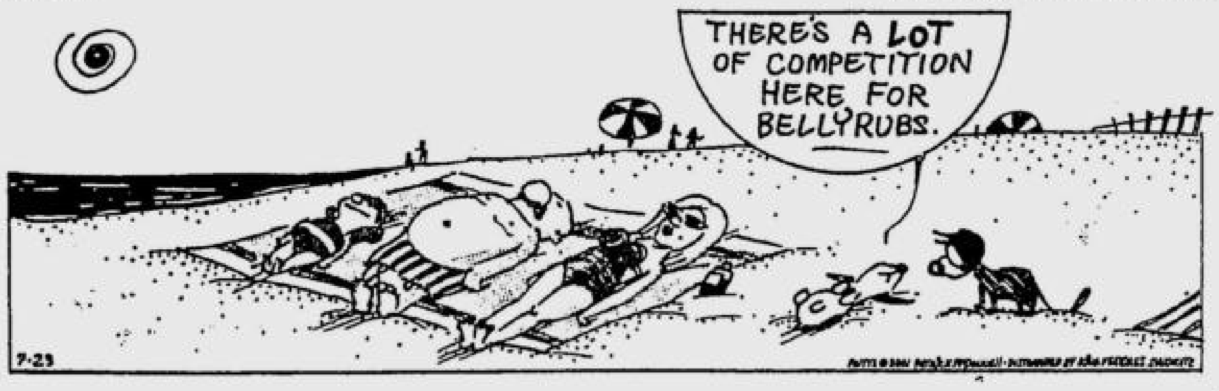
B1 GANG BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


SI BOGING DIN.
LUSOB, MGA RABBITS!!!
b1gang.com.ph
ATTACK, MGA...
EVGARAYBLAS 8.26.1
BUWAYA!!!

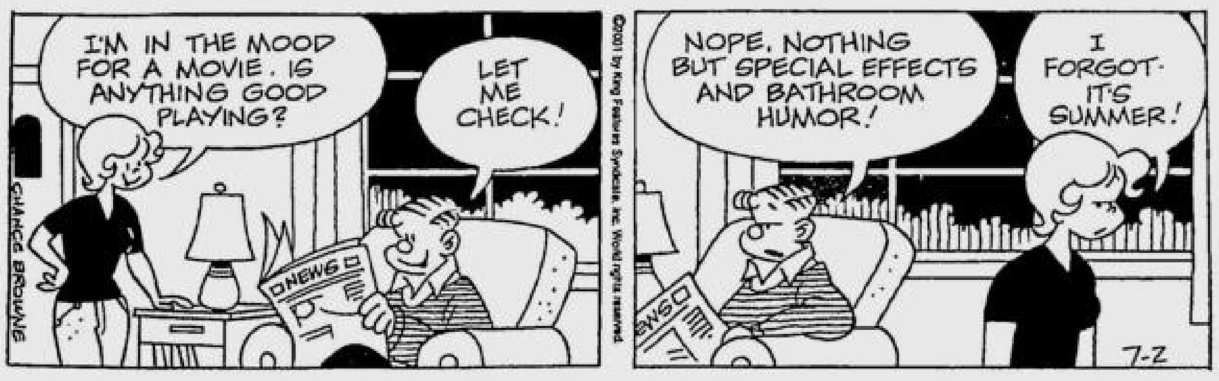
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


MORNING DEAR-- RISE AND SHINE! WE HAVE LOTS TO DO IN THE GARDEN THIS MORNING.
GRMBL
MMM... :COUGH: :COUGH:
:COUGH: ...SOME ...SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY...THROAT :COUGH: :COUGH:
...CAN'T WORK TODAY... :COUGH:
BEN...I KNOW THAT ROUTINE.
TRUST ME-- IT'S MORE CONVINCING OVER THE PHONE!
SHELTON

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THERE'S A LOT OF COMPETITION HERE FOR BELLYRUBS.
7-23

HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


I'M IN THE MOOD FOR A MOVIE. IS ANYTHING GOOD PLAYING?
LET ME CHECK!
NEWS
CHANCE BROWNE
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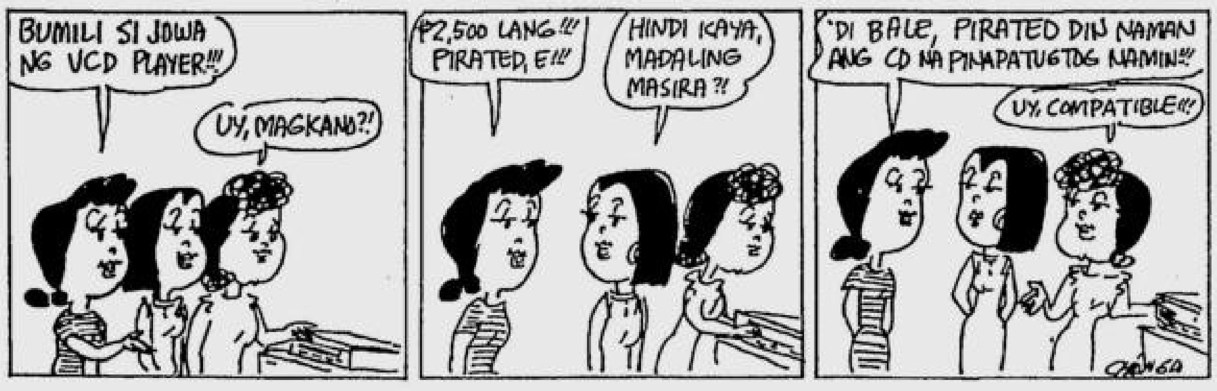
NOPE. NOTHING BUT SPECIAL EFFECTS AND BATHROOM HUMOR!
I FORGOT- IT'S SUMMER!
7-2

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO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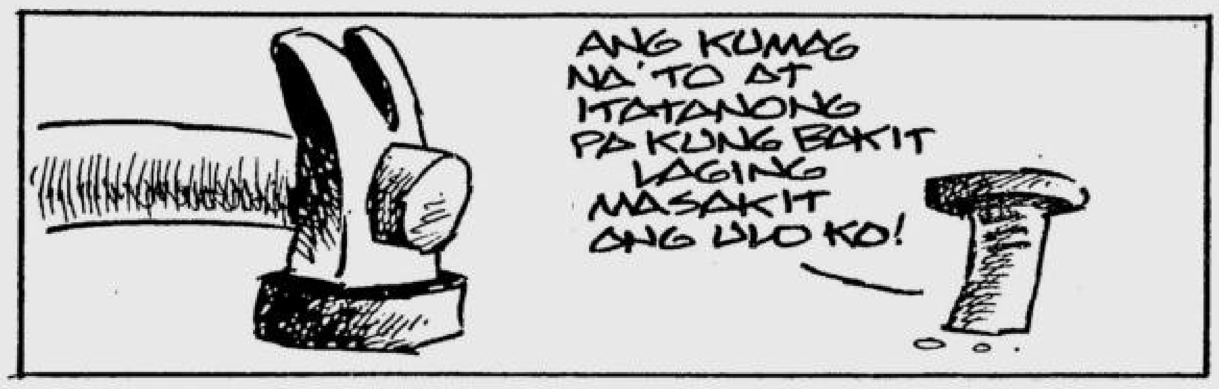
ANG KUMAG NA 'TO AT ITATANONG PA KUNG BAKIT LAGING MASAKIT ANG ULO KO!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tuesday Weld, Barbara Bach, Paul Reubens, Bob Kerrey, Diana Scarwid
Happy Birthday: Follow your desires and don't let criticism stop you. You have some terrific ideas and if you just add a little detail to plans, the results will make you happy. Be true to yourself and to your dreams, and you'll get what you want out of life this year. Your numbers: 2, 15, 18, 23, 36, 38

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Romance is in the air, so make arrangements to see that special person. Secret encounters are likely. A Libra or Sagittarius will entice you, but be careful not to reveal personal information.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Complete essential jobs that don't require input from other people. Relying on others will lead to additional work. Clear things up quickly and spend some time nurturing your relationship.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You will have excellent ideas and should be able to help your partner get ahead. Get busy on projects that will improve your image. You'll have the discipline to succeed.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): One of your colleagues may need someone to talk to. Listen to complaints and find solutions to the issues. Don't let your emotions interfere with your performance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Someone may be willing to lend you money. If you take advantage of the offers, don't let it ruin the friendship.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The work you do out of your home will pay off. Try not to upset those you live with. Children may need help with school projects. Avoid criticism.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Activities will be satisfying and lead to promising new connections. Be cautious if you operate vehicles or any kind of equipment. Don't let family members take you for granted.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your compassion toward peers and your hands-on experience will put you in a leadership position. Be careful not to offend someone who thought he or she would be in the forefront.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your ability to communicate openly should open doors that have been closed in the past. However, be discriminating, as some of your contacts will make empty promises.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your beliefs may lead you in a different direction. Follow your heart concerning your personal partner. Be discreet, and don't let others in on your secrets.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Getting involved in groups will lead to romance and exciting friendships. You've needed mental stimulation like this for some time now. It's time to get back in the game of life.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't let a colleague put you down or cause you grief. Present your own ideas and work yourself. A superior will be pleased with what you've accomplished.

Birthday Baby: You certainly know how to get what you want. You are clever, cautious and caring and do everything superbly. You aren't one to give up or to step aside.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14					■	15				■	16			
17					■	18				■	19			
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59				■	60				■	61				
62				■	63				■	64				
65				■	66				■	67				

By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA
7/12/01

ACROSS
1 Eyeglasses: slang
6 Burn slightly
10 Casual talk
14 The __, the Netherlands
15 In this place
16 Hindu princess
17 Wed without warning
18 Pipe bends
19 Comic Johnson
20 Fable writer
21 Pamper
23 Decree
25 Permit
26 Spoke
29 Type of general
34 Light beams
35 Served perfectly
36 Styled after
37 Nora's dog
38 Conk out
39 Spunk
40 Sault __ Marie
41 Wasteland
43 Karl or Moses
45 Red fishes?
47 On cloud nine
48 Begley and Begley
49 Droops
50 Dispense freely
55 Sen. Kefauver
59 Think-tank product
60 Plus
61 Danish golfer Thomas
62 Melodramatic exclamation
63 Small valley
64 Source of bast fiber
65 One of Adam's sons
66 Undemanding
67 Not asleep

DOWN
1 George Beverly or John
2 Washed-out
3 Conceits
4 Favorite thing
5 More likely to ooze
6 Thorax
7 Share the load
8 Woody Guthrie's son
9 Firmness of purpose
10 Arts and __
11 Tortoise's opponent
12 Pot entrance fee
13 Even
22 Requirement
24 Brief commercials
26 Cut a slit
27 Refinement
28 Fall flower
29 Carnivals
30 Chill
31 Card for readers
32 Dress style
33 Given a score
38 Trail persistently
39 Boxer's Achilles' heel?
41 Kind of skirt
42 During a performance
43 __ culpa
44 Math course
46 Go over same ground again
49 Rock-strewn
50 Portuguese explorer
51 Inactive
52 Chair
53 __ podrida
54 Manipulates
56 Musante's TV series
57 French avant-garde composer Satie
58 Macbeth's dagger

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

P	A	W	S	■	S	C	O	T	■	D	R	O	P	S
O	M	I	T	■	O	H	I	O	■	R	E	M	A	P
T	O	T	O	■	B	A	L	M	■	I	N	A	N	E
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■	■	■	G	A	R	R	■	I	N	K	■	■	■	■
J	E	W	E	L	■	M	I	N	G	■	B	I	E	R
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A	N	T	O	N	■	P	E	E	L	■	E	L	A	N
T	O	A	S	T	■	T	E	D	S	■	T	Y	R	E

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7/12/01

Memories of the MSO

(From page D12)

seven consecutive nights in a Chinese movie house. In one performance, a blackout occurred but she didn't stop playing. The American soldiers gave her a standing ovation.

Added Brimo: "I was the natural choice for MSO soloist because all I did during the Occupation was practice that concerto."

Dr. Zipper himself was nearly killed by the Japanese in Malate (his MSO soloist, Ernesto Vallejo, was not so lucky; the violinist and his family were massacred by the Japanese in Tanauan, Batangas.) He had to beg for giveaways from military camps for the uniform of MSO members.

After Dr. Zipper had located all his living orchestra members, the MSO played at the ruins of Sta. Cruz Church where Manalo was soloist in the Beethoven concerto. Manalo played a total of 25 performances of the Beethoven concerto for the US army troops in that same venue.

This postwar concert in the ruins of Sta. Cruz Church received worldwide publicity in such publications as Life and Time magazines.

For the Manalos and the Brimos, life with MSO was both a time for romance and living dangerously with vintage Brahms and Beethoven in the background.

Here and there

AS expected, the Licad concert with the Asian Youth Symphony (AYO) was sold out and people came even with two typhoons battering Metro Manila.

The Filipina pianist showed what she could do given a first-rate conductor and a well-trained orchestra. PPO executive director Zenas Reyes Lozada got in touch with Steinway technician in Hamburg to fix the CCP piano and the company sent its Philippine representative. Licad was pleased to high heavens with the result.

That concert attracted an A-1 crowd who didn't applaud in between movements. What I am saying is that if CCP can put up an A-1 production, it will attract an A-1 audience as well. For this reason, the AYO engagements in Manila were all worth the "blood, sweat and tears" (the initial negotiations, the backstage, hotel and airport arrival and departure episodes involving AYO artistic director Richard Pontzious could fill up three engrossing, suspense-filled chapters of an orchestra memoir).

That Romanian conductor Sergiu Comissiona is heaven-sent. During the tour, she regaled Licad with stories on how he felt having Rudulf Serkin as soloist many years back. Now, Comissiona found himself conducting Serkin's favorite pupil, Licad herself.

* * *

Pianist Jonathan Coo, gold medalist in the 1st Picazo Piano Competition, is lecturer and interpreter in a unique concert called "An Evening of Chopin and Kasilag Works" at the Greenhills Music Studio Recital Hall on Sept. 5, 7 p.m. He is probably the first Filipino to feature an all-Kasilag program at New York's State's National Public Radio's "Opus Classics Live" and was presented by the Bangkok Chopin Society on a CNN televised program called "New Trends on Technique."

A master of music in performance and literature graduate of the Eastman School of Music in New York, Coo will also give a lecture on Kasilag's East-West music. The concert is probably Coo's belated musical birthday treat to Tita King (Kasilag) whose birthday falls on Aug. 31. Call 724-0705/2543.

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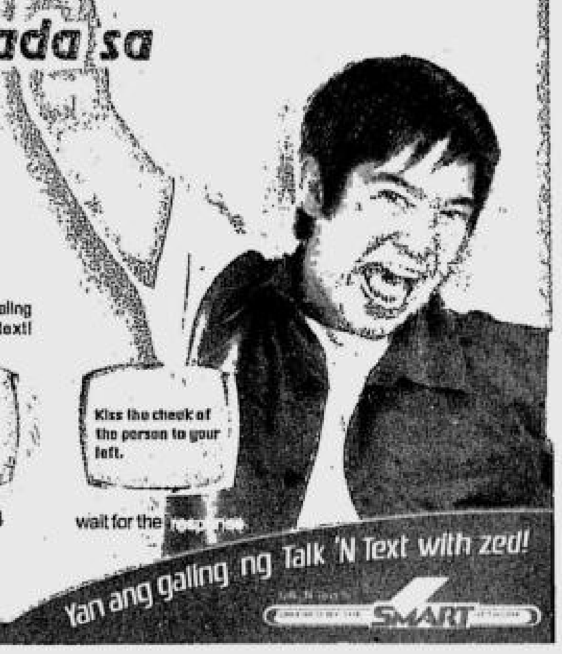

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Memories of the MSO

BY PABLO A. TARIMAN

A TINGE of nostalgia will surely engulf music lovers as the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) II debuts at the St. Cecilia's Hall on Sept. 1.

The first MSO founded in 1926 by Dr. Alexander Lippay and Dr. Herbert Zipper is gone but a new generation of MSO musicians nurtured by Prof. Basilio Manalo and Sr. Mary Placid Abejo are struggling to fill that void.

If the life and times of the MSO were made into a movie, it will be a romantic blockbuster like "Pearl Harbor," as engrossing as "The Great Gatsby" and gripping like "Schindler's List."

Its opening scenes would be Manila in the mid-'20s when TV sets were non-existent and the main source of entertainment were recitals in exclusive girls' schools and operas at the Manila Grand Opera House. Music lessons in most middle upper class families were a must then.

The then young, not yet famous Nicanor Abelardo eked out a living by playing live music in movie houses on Avenida Rizal showing silent movies and doing extra musical chores in Sta. Ana cabaret (to the shock of his erstwhile rival, Francisco Santiago).

There should be an opera highlight in this MSO story with President Quezon watching Bellini's "La Sonnambula" at the Manila Grand Opera House with MSO soloist Mercedes Matias Santiago in the lead soprano role.

For the war scene, there should be an MSO concert at the Manila Metropolitan Theater under the watchful eyes of the Japanese soldiers with pianists and violinists fleeing from Japanese marauders clutching their music scores on liberation day.

A moving finale should be another concert scene just after the war when violinist Basilio Manalo was soloist in the Beethoven concerto right in the ruins of Sta. Cruz Church.

These suggested movie highlights actually happened. Music-making was at its best during the time of the MSO.

The late Redentor Romero recalled hearing the MSO in the late '40s under Bernardino Custodio with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist in the Mendelssohn concerto. "I was just awed," said Romero, who passed away in March this year.

MSO soloist Reynaldo Reyes said the '50s and the '60s should be the golden age of music in Manila from the kind of first-rate programming Manila's music lovers got from the MSO.

Harpist Lourdes de Leon Gregorio, who opened the 1969 MSO season as soloist in Ravel's Introduction and Allegro for Harp and Orchestra, can only agree. "We were not paid much, or even not at all, but we were all driven to play well regardless of non-existent regular salary," she added.

What was the music scene in Manila when the Manila Symphony Orchestra was born in January 1926 and onward to the '30s?

Before the founding of the MSO, Manila was already awash with musicians and assorted ensembles.

Bonifacio Abdon had a violin school in Quiapo and music lessons could be had at San Agustin Church.

There was already the Women's Orchestra of Pandacan founded by composer-conductor Ladislaw Bonus, the Gruet Orchestra of Sampaloc founded by Pedro Gruet, and the Molina Orchestra founded Juan Molina (the father of National Artist Antonio Molina, who is the father of music critic Lito Molina), among others.

The celebrated violin prodigy of the time was Ernesto Vallejo and in the 1930s and in the early '40s before he and his family died in the hands of Japanese marauders, he was both concertmaster and frequent soloist of the pre-war MSO.

Five years before MSO was born, Vallejo was heard by Russian violinist Mischa Ellman during his 1921 Manila visit and firmly recommended that the Filipino study abroad. Three years after MSO was born, Vallejo debuted at New York's Town Hall and performed for US President Calvin Coolidge at the White House and for Gen. Douglas MacArthur in his Philadelphia Estate.

When Vallejo became soloist of the MSO in 1936, he became a star of Manila's classical music crowd.

Wrote MSO chronicler Carmita Legarda: "Vallejo's great artistry and commanding presence, despite his diminutive size, always proved a drawing card whenever he was soloist, and his level of musicianship helped to mould the orchestra (MSO) to achieve a standard of excellence and maturity."

Pianist Regalado, who was soloist in the Philippine premier of the Shostakovich piano concerto with the MSO under Bernardino Custodio, recalled that Manila was clean and had no traffic and pollution in the 1930s. It took only 35 minutes by bike from San Juan to the Manila Metropolitan Theater where he was also accompanist of bass baritone Jose Mossessgeld Santiago Font (the first and last Filipino to sing at La Scala di Milan in the late '20s) in the rehearsals of "Rigoletto."

Basilio Manalo was a natural recruit for the MSO because he grew up in a Nueva Ecija house surrounded by music. His maternal grandfather, Don Felimon Cajucom, the first civil governor of Nueva Ecija, had a daily regimen that includes listening to opera and symphonic music at certain time of the day. As a boy, Manalo recalls seeing the late conductor Alexander Lippay training his students only in his *sando*. His first teacher was Luis Valencia (he was soloist of the MSO under Lippay in Bach's A Major Concerto, Brahms' D Major and Paganini's D Major concertos) and when Valencia was sent by his grandfather to Vienna on a scholarship, Manalo commuted from Cabanatuan to Manila for violin lessons with Ernesto Vallejo.

DR. Herbert Zipper (on the podium) in the last concert of MSO at the Metropolitan Theater in 1989. Filipinos heard their first live Debussy and Stravinsky through the MSO under his baton.

MSO II founders Prof. Basilio Manalo, with Ces Manalo, and Sr. Mary Placid Abejo. They believe in sustained training for the new generation of musicians.

To Manalo, Dr. Zipper was almost like a surrogate father. "My musical career took off because of him. I studied counterpoint with him and he's an extraordinary teacher. He teaches slowly but thoroughly," he said.

When future MSO concertmaster and soloist Basilio Manalo was in his teens, he would often go up to Baguio where a neighbor, his future wife, Cecilia Mapa from Bacolod, would hear him play Abelardo's "Cavatina" accompanied by his maternal grandmother, Leonor Mur (a piano graduate of the Liceo de Barcelona).

Recalled Ms Manalo: "I'd often see Billy (Manalo) in those Baguio tea musicals but I also saw him quite often in the MSO concerts where he was in the first violin section. The pieces that stay in mind to this day is Abelardo's 'Cavatina' and Rossini's 'Barber of Seville' (transcribed for the violin). After his Juilliard studies where he played the Brahms concerto with the MSO at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum under Dr. Zipper, we got married."

The war years were trying moments for Dr. Zipper and some MSO soloists.

Pianist Stella Goldenberg Brimo first played the Emperor concerto under Dr. Lippay and then the Triple Concerto for Two Pianos (with Esteban Anguita an Aida Gonzales-Sanz) under Dr. Zipper.

But one concerto that she would not forget was Brahms' B Flat Concerto, which she assiduously practiced during the Japanese Occupation. She rehearsed at night and stayed home during the day even as she continued her piano lessons under Dr. Zipper who biked regularly to her residence.

The Brahms piano score was one prized possession. She literally hid it under her blouse when it was time to evacuate to safer houses.

Brimo told this writer when she visited Manila two years ago: "I hid it here (pointing to her breast) and I would not part with it even as we kept on moving from one place to another."

After the war, Brimo played the Brahms concerto with the MSO for American GIs for

MEMORIES/ p.D11

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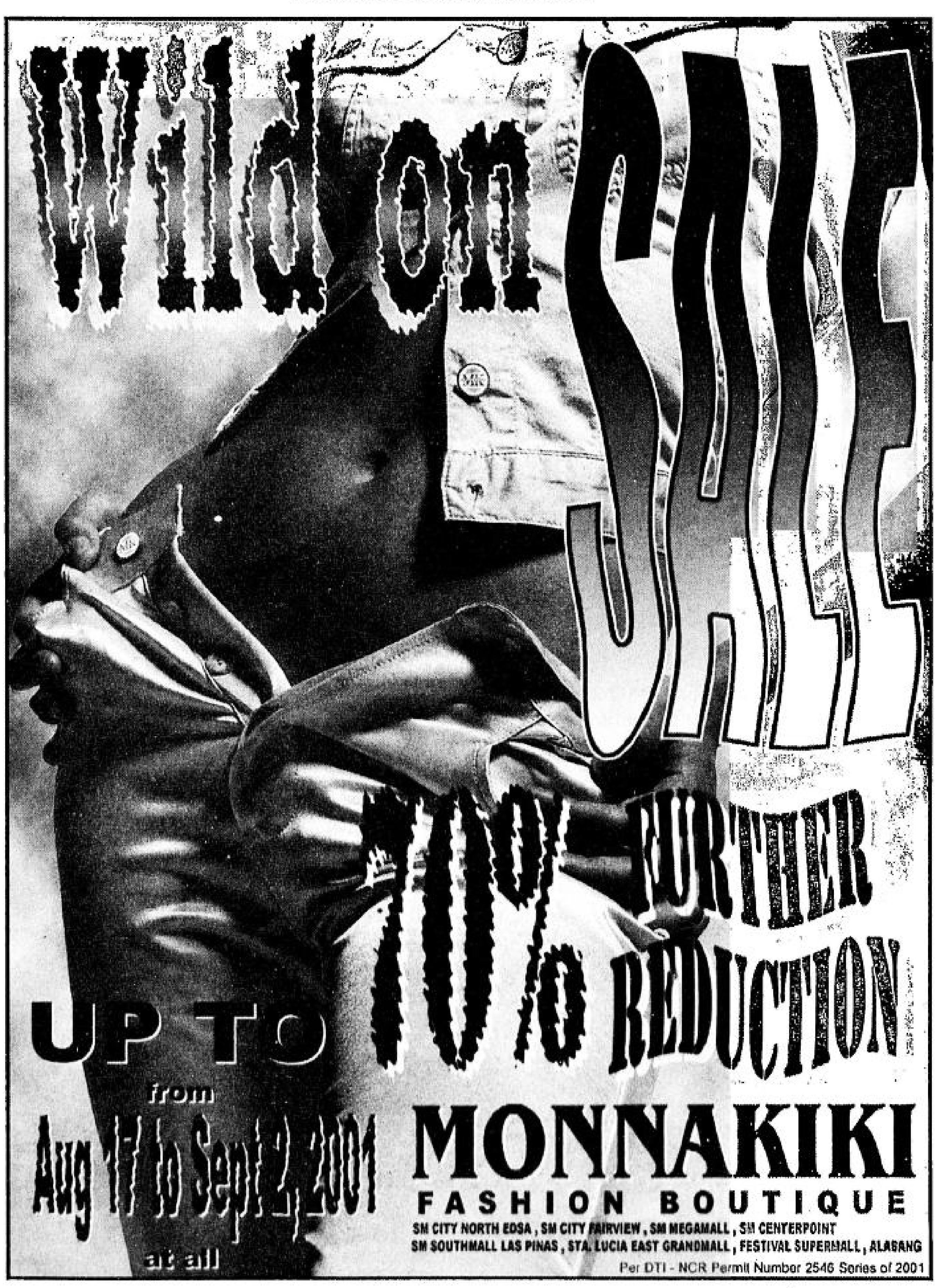

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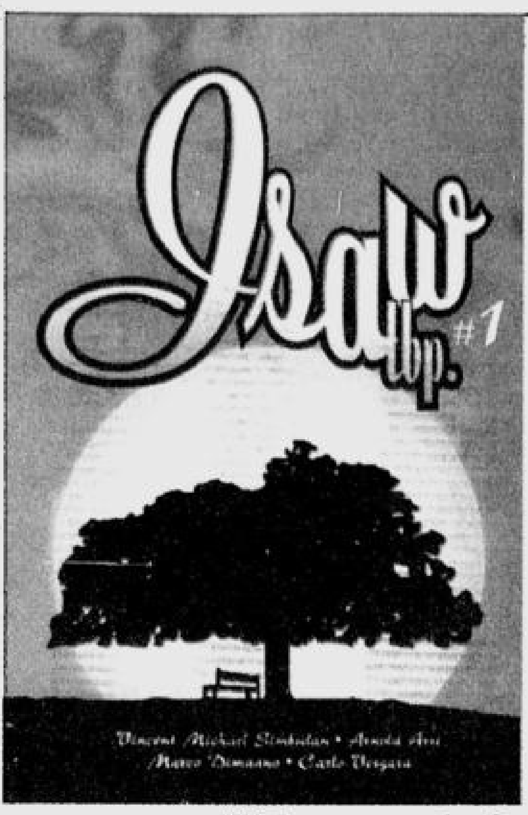
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The brave taste of 'Isaw'

By Ruel S. De Vera

Isaw, Atbp. # 1
By Vincent Michael Simbulan, Arnold Arre, Marco Dimaano and Carlo Vergara
Quest Ventures, Pasig, 2001, 56 pages

REVIEW

GRANTED, it takes guts, pun intended, to name an anthology after street food derived from chicken intestines. But Quest Ventures' "Isaw, Atbp.," is in reality a labor of love from some of the best talents in the Philippine comic-book industry. This mishmash of story, art and poetry speaks volumes about the kind of thoughtful, poignant

THE BRAVE/ p.E2

This anthology featuring some of the country's top comic-book talents contains real world tales both thoughtful and challenging

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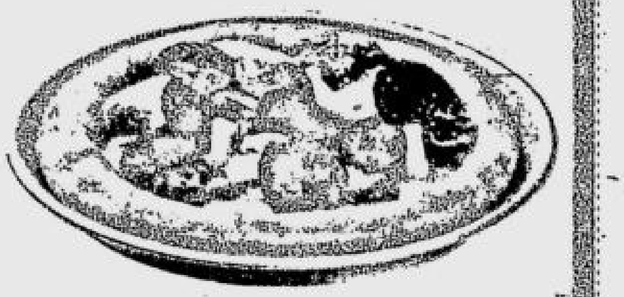
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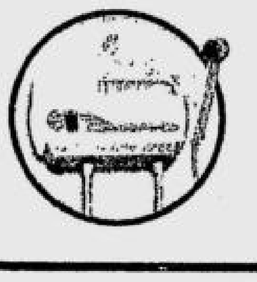
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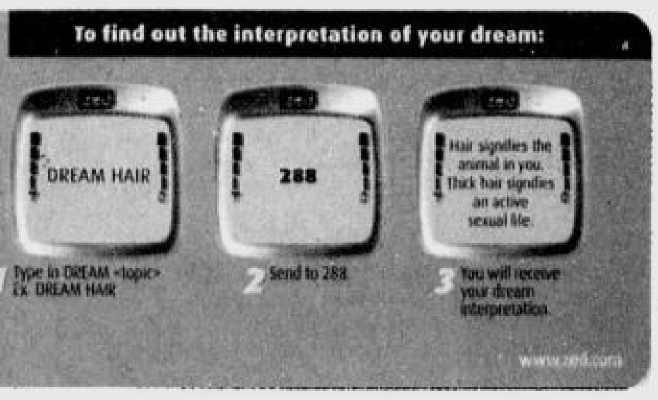
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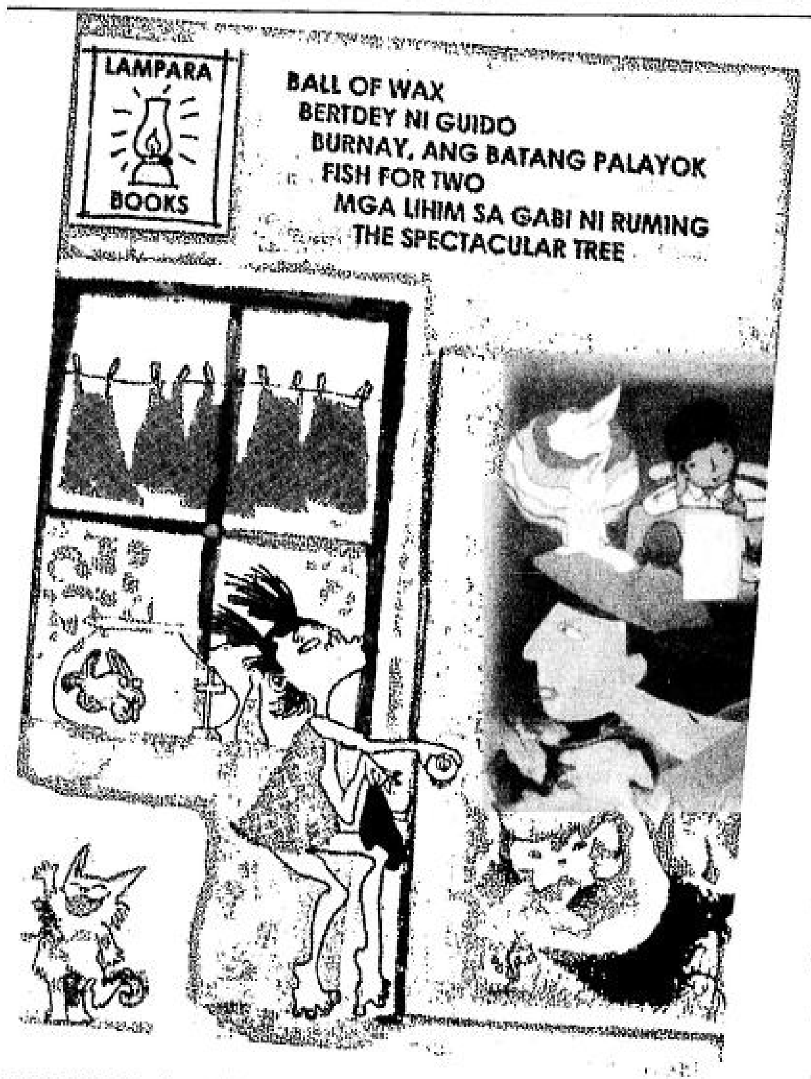


LAMPARA Books will launch several new children's ttiles on Sept. 1, 5:30 p.m., at the Megatrade Hall during the 12th National Bookfair at SM Megamall. To be launched are "Fish for Two," written by Becky Bravo and illustrated by Jason Moss; "Burnay, ang Batang Palayok," written by Augie Rivera and illustrated by Dindo Llana, and "Bertdey ni Guido," written by Rene O. Villanueva and illustrated by John Crisostomo. Other titles are "Ball of Wax," written by Heidi Emily Eusebio-Abad and illustrated by Doyit Saballa-Baquirin; "Mga Lihim sa Gabi ni Ruming," written by Rhandee Garlitos and illustrated by Ibarra Crisostomo, and "The Spectacular Tree," written and illustrated by Robert Gunnar Magnuson.

Powerbooks sale

POWERBOOKS Specialty Store is holding its annual "Power Sale" until Sept. 16 at all its branches (Arnaiz, Megamall and Alabang). Look for the color-coded stickers on books: Blue, Pink, Green, Orange and Yellow in order to get up to 50 percent, 40 percent, 30 percent, 10 percent and 5 percent discounts, respectively. Books without stickers are 20 percent off. As a bonus, you get a Powerbooks Carry-all Case with every P2,500 purchase throughout the duration of the sale.

Call 844-4455 or visit the branch nearest you.

Seminar on cultural diversity

A VISITING Filipino-American expert in multicultural education is holding a series of seminars on "Understanding Cultural Diversity."

Lutgarda R.A. Ortaleza-Lee, an educator with more than 20 years experience teaching multiculturalism in US public schools, lectures on "understanding cultural diversity in the context of global trends in theology, faith, religion and education." Seminar participants are expected to develop critical thinking in deciphering culturally loaded issues and address culturally diverse issues without being confrontational.

Organized by the Management and Organizational Development for Empowerment Inc., the seminars will be held at Trinity College, E. Rodriquez Avenue, QC on Aug. 28, and at the University of Santo Tomas on a date to be announced soon.

Earlier, Lee conducted lectures at the Philippine Christian University, the UP Rural High School in Los Baños, Laguna and Silliman University in Dumaguete City.

Lee is author of the book "Teaching Cultural Diversity Through Children's Literature," which New Day Publishers launched on Aug. 24 at Silliman University. There will be a book signing by the author on Sept. 1 at the SM Megamall during the National Book Fair.

The brave taste of 'Isaw'

(From page E1)

and realistic stories that the comic book can produce.

The book itself appears unassuming, with its quaint, red-orange cover art. It features the same coated black-and-white pages that previous Quest titles have featured. But "Isaw, Atbp." is the next step in logical progression of the Quest Ventures line after the futuristic road trip "A Trip to Tagaytay" and the ultra-realistic confrontation "One Night in Purgatory." And it's both brave and heartfelt at the same time.

"Isaw, Atbp." contains three stories that stand alone, but are also intertwined somehow. The stories are sandwiched by edgy poetry from Dean Francis Alfar, Nikki Alfar, Emrys Capati, Vincent Michael Simbulan and Tobie Abad. The real, uh, meat of "Isaw, Atbp.," however, are the three stories.

Atrophy

The first story, "Flat," is a reflection on the natural atrophy that occurs a romantic relationship through time. Written by Simbulan and featuring the evocative art of award-winning Arnold Arre (of "Tagaytay" and "The Mythology Class"), "Flat" is a tale told at different speeds, and thus at different levels of sadness and anticipation. It is fascinating to see Arre illustrating purely modern and realistic subjects for once, but his characters remain imbued with the kind of distinctive personality he is known for. The story is told with obvious self-assurance, and while others might find it a tad sentimental, the dialogue is witty and the flashbacks provide a painful counterpoint to what is really happening in "Flat."

The third story, also written by Simbulan, is the most ambitious of the three. "He Said, She Said" is an up-close study on the relationship of a gay father and his young daughter, seen from different perspectives.

Making full use of the muscular art of "Purgatory's" Carlo Vergara, "He Said, She Said" clearly shifts from one view to another, from one time to another with ease. There is a searing intensity involved in this story, particularly between the adults, even the missing mother. But the star of this tale is the cute kid Elysa. She is the dramatic center of this tale (together with Mr. Bubbles, of course) and radiates the innocence and redemption the story aims for.

Experimental

Most accomplished and experimental is the middle story, "Sampaguita Girl." Written (in a fashion) and illustrated by Marco Dimaano (the manga-influenced "Angel Ace"), "Sampaguita Girl is a wordless survey of the world that a simple sampaguita girl lives in. It is a harrowing, strange world where the unnamed street urchin encounters death, danger, pollution, hunger and ultimately, her dreams, all in the same street corner. Dimaano's gorgeous art and perfect pacing show that he has truly gone beyond the conventions and limitations of manga art, and can now harness it to tell beautiful, haunting tales like this one, huge cartoonish eyes or not. Already entertaining many with his work on the continuing "Angel Ace" series, Dimaano offers up a virtuoso performance with "Sampaguita Girl."

A caveat: "Isaw, Atbp.," like the Quest Ventures titles before it, discusses sensitive topics frankly and decisively. Taken individually or as a whole, the stories of "Isaw, Atbp." Are clearly meant for open, adventurous readers. Similarly, this anthology is not for comic-book zombies who are looking for spandex-clothed mutants, ad nauseam.

What they will find is a brave, satisfying compilation of stories that further explores the storytelling frontier that is the comic book form. "Isaw, Atbp.," shows that Philippine comic book titles are edging more and more into the real world. With its great art and self-aware storytelling, "Isaw, Atbp.," is an intellectual, enjoyable stop on that continuing journey.

Available from Comic Quest branches

UP Press to launch 26 titles at bookfair

THE UP Press 7th Mega Book Launch, featuring 26 titles, will be held on Sept. 2, 5-8 p.m., at SM Megamall Megatrade Hall, Function Room B.

Among the books to be launched are 15 scholarly works and reference materials including Damiana L. Eugenio's "Philippine Folk Literature: The Epics,' O.D. Corpuz' "Saga and Triumph: The Filipino Revolution Against Spain," Belen T.G. Medina's "The Filipino Family" (revised edition) and Teodoro A. Agoncillo's "The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines, 1941-1945" (2001 edition). A number of titles deal with contemporary issues on Philippine society such as Walden Bello's "The Future in the Balance: Essays on Globalization and Resistance," Soliman M. Santos' "The Moro Islamic Challenge: Constitutional Rethinking for the Mindanao Peace Process" and Kathleen Weekley's "The Communist Party of the Philippines 1968-1993: A Story of Its Theory and Practice."

Also to be launched are works by three National Artists: Leonor Orosa Goquingco's "Curtain Call: Selected Reviews, 1957-2000," a collection of reviews covering music, drama, and dance performances; Rolando S. Tinio's "May Katwiran ang Katwiran at Iba Pang Dula," a collection of original plays in English and Filipino by the consummate theater artist, and NVM Gonzalez's "Seven Hills Away and Other Stories" (2001 edition), the book, first published in the US in 1947, that "started NVM's passion with the art of writing."

Other literary titles to be launched are: "A Makeshift Sun: Stories and Poems" by Gémino H. Abad; "Ang Aklat Likhaan ng Tula at Maikling Kuwento 1998," edited by Aurelio Agcaoili and Jose F. Lacaba; "Ang Aking Prince Charming at Iba Pang Noveleta ng Pag-ibig" by Joi Barrios;" Growing Into Asia and Other Essays' by Susan P. Evangelista; "The Likhaan Book of Poetry and Fiction 1998," edited by J. Neil C. Garcia and Charlson Ong Gonzalez; "The Likhaan Book of Philippine Drama 1991-1996: From Page to Stage," edited by Anton Juan; "Paano Magbasa ng Panitikang Filipino: Mga Babasahing Pangkolehiyo," edited by Bienvenido Lumbera et al.; "Mga Kislap ng Panulat" by Epifanio G. Matute; "May Isang Panahon: Mga Kuwento, Sanaysay, Tula" by Genoveva E. Matute.

Completing the lineup of scholarly works and reference materials are: "Introduction to Electric Fields" by Efren F. Abaya; "Fellow Traveler: Essays on Filipino Communism" by Patricio N. Abinales; "Introductory Mathematical Economics" by Rolando S. Danao; "Diskurso sa Pilipinismo: Pagsilang ng Inang Bayan" by Domingo G. Landicho; "Ang Kabite sa Gunita: Essays on Cavite and the Philippine Revolution" by Isagani Medina; "Dissent and Resistance" by Abraham F. Sarmiento; "Sa Loob at Labas ng Mall Kong Sawi Kaliluha'y Siyang Nangyayaring Hari: Ang Pagkatuto at Pagtatanghal ng Kulturang Popular" by Rolando B. Tolentino.

The books will be sold at a 20-percent discount during the launch.

Biography and family history workshop

A WORKSHOP on the writing of biographies and family histories will be held at the Ayala Museum on Makati Avenue starting Sept. 1, continuing for four Saturday mornings, with Antonio A. Hidalgo as facilitator.

Hidalgo is a bilingual writer (English and Filipino) who has published 14 books, including a historical and intellectual biography, "The Life and Times of Don Pio Pedrosa." He has written several best-selling essays and conceptualized and edited the unusual "Milflore's Guide to Philipppine Shopping Malls," which contains 27 essays on 35 malls nationwide by some of the best-known writers in the country. He won prizes in the 2001 Palanca Memorial Awards for literature and the 2000 NVM Gonzalez National Literature Awards for his short fiction. One of his stories is included in the "1999 Aklat Likhaan ng Tula at Maikling Kuwento" of the UP Creative Writing Center and the UP Press. Hidalgo is the founder and president of the Milflores Publishing Corp.

Before becoming a full-time writer in 1999, Hidalgo served for 15 years as an international professional in the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), where he became the Unicef representative to Korea, the Unicef representative to Burma, and the head of the Asia Section in the Unicef headquarters in New York. He also served in the cabinet of former President Fidel V. Ramos as secretary general of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

The Ayala workshop will help beginning writers with their biography and family history projects. The three-hour modules contain writing exercises intended to develop specific skills in writing biographies and family histories.

The workshop is part of an ongoing Escuela sa Museo continuing education program in creative writing held every year. Call Thel Villafranca at 812-1191 to -97 local 130.

Top Filipino poets debate ROTC abolition in 'balagtasan' at UST

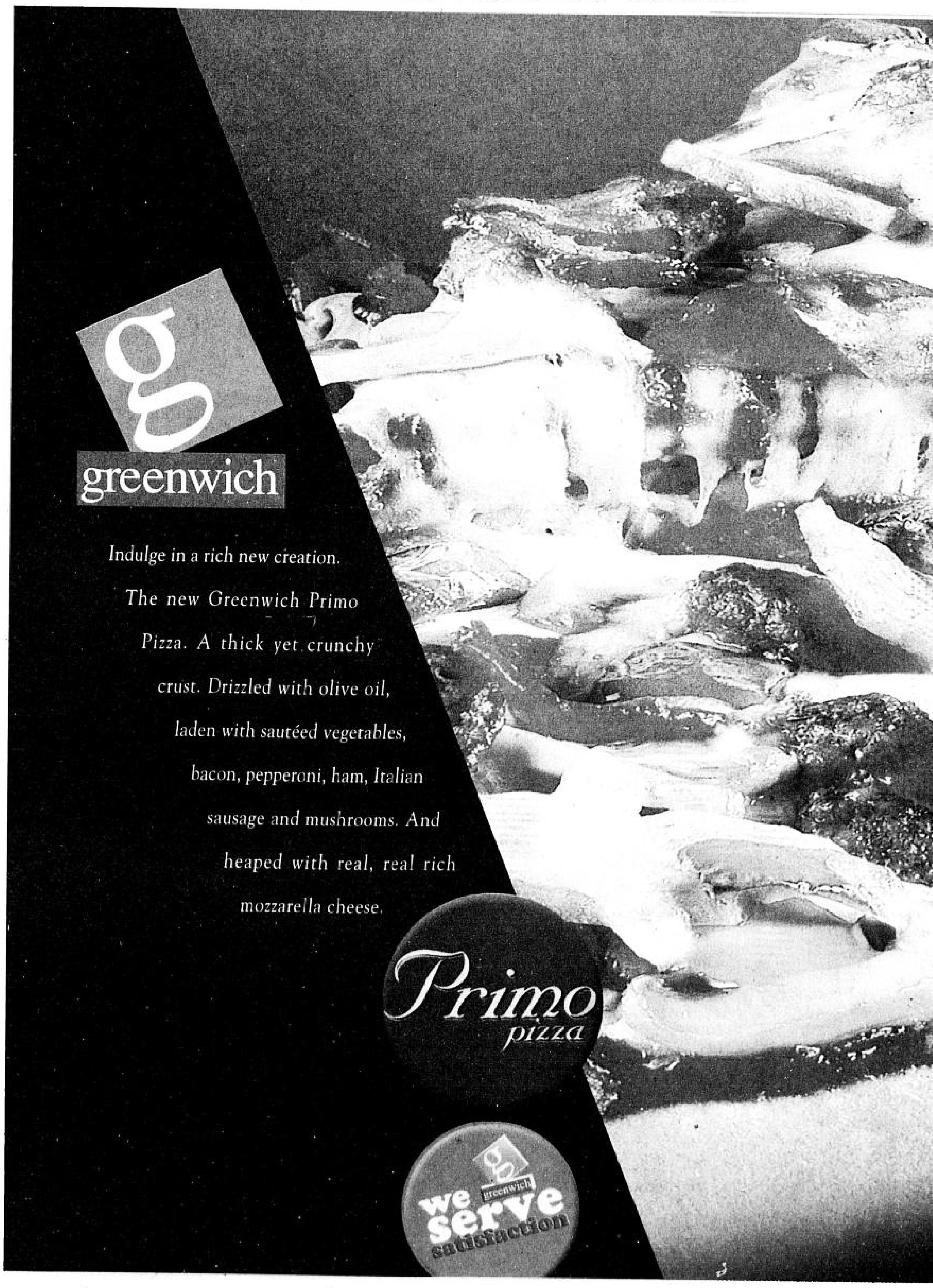
TOP Filipino poets Teo Antonio and Mike Coroza square off in a rare Balagtasan on Aug. 29, 3 p.m., at the audiovisual room of the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the University of Santo Tomas.

Organized by the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies (CCWS) to mark Buwan ng Wika, Antonio and Coroza will pit poetic wits to debate the proposition, "Dapat Ba o Hindi Dapat Alisin ang ROTC (Reserved Officers Training Corps) sa Kurikulum? (To Abolish the ROTC or Not)."

Lakandiwa or moderator is Rebecca Anonuevo, Palanca Award-winning feminist poet and junior associate of the CCWS.

It will be the second time that Antonio and Coroza will clash. In March 1999, the two debated whether or not to legalize gambling, also at UST. Antonio, son of the late *balagtasan* champion Emilio Mar. Antonio, is considered the top Filipino poet of his generation. Coroza is one of the most exciting young voices in Filipino poetry today. In this year's Palanca awards for literature, he placed first in the Tula category.

The poetic joust is open to the public. Call 731-3101 local 8281.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Women raise funds to buy organ for Paco parish

FOR THE FIRST time, the women of Catholic organizations in San Fernando de Dilao parish in Paco showed how their commitment to the church has resulted in raising money for a Yamaha organ that can be used by the choir.

During the week marking the feast of the Santo Sepulcro, the Mutya ng Paco coronation took place at the auditorium of the new Cardinal Sin Building on Paz Street. Mayor Lito Atienza was there to crown the winner, Mila Llorin of the CWL.

Her runners-up were Catalina Yalung (Couples for Christ), Linda Ibarra (Ladies of Charities), Doris Suyat (Areas I-XV) and Elvie Arnan (Apostleship of Prayer). Another candidate was Laura Zapanta (Special Minister of Holy Communion and Knights of Columbus).

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

A brainchild of fiesta committee chair Sol Alturas Yu, the project involved soliciting funds for the purchase of an organ that usually costs more than a hundred thousand pesos.

It showed that group effort could do wonders in helping parish priest Msgr. Domingo Cirilos Jr., who, for the last three years has been able to restore the altar and reconstruct the *convento* and the new Cardinal Sin Building. The money used was from the funds saved by Bishop Teodoro Bacani when he was its parish priest for 11 years.

Help from Paco designers

It was also a unique idea to ask fashion designers holding shops in Paco to help dress up the images. Raul Ramirez did the vestment of the Sto. Niño; Barge Ramos, the St. John the Evangelist; Maxie Cinco, the Santo Sepulcro; Lyle Ibanez, the altar vestments of white and gold; and Frederick Peralta, Nuestra Señora de Candelaria, patroness of Paco. Tweet Alturas and Sidney Sio Perez did the flower decor for the whole church. It was a beautiful fiesta; the first one I've ever attended since I've lived in Manila. Keep up the good work, Sol Alturas Yu, Jojo Quilantang and all members of the Paco parish organization.

WORKING together for Paco Fiesta: Jojo Quilanting, Sol Alturas-Yu, Aida Altamirano, emcee Robin Da Rosa, show directors Tweet Alturas and Sidney Sio Perez and guest Cheloy Muhlach

Visit to St. Pancratius

FOR THOSE who want to have good health and good jobs, they can go to Paco Church and pray to St. Pancratius. I know only three churches that have the image—Binondo Church, St. Pancratius Church in La Loma and the chapel at Paco Park. In the same vein, those who are devotees of Our Lady of Candelaria can also go to Paco Church.

Caring HANDS

CARING HANDS Foundation (for Help a Needy Diocesan Servant) will turn 6 on Sept. 3. It is heartwarming to note that the foundation has helped fishermen and farmers through livelihood programs in the dioceses of Gumaca, Quezon, Virac, Catanduanes and Sorsogon.

Fr. Butch Fajardo, a paraplegic, did not let his disability hinder him from helping his constituents to set up a piggery. He was also able to pay back the loan extended to him on time.

I've met Father Butch way back in 1993 when he was already on a wheelchair. I am happy to know through the Caring HANDS that he is well and is still doing his ministry.

The members of the board of trustees of Caring HANDS will have a retreat in Tagaytay on Sept. 3 to mark their anniversary. Thanks to Corazon Antonio, Sixto Antonio, Dulce Barretto, Evelyn Cu-Unjieng, Corazon Jaucian, Edmundo Kaimo, Epifania Lirio, Babot Oreta, Concepcion Peronilla, Marianne Pimentel, Wilhelmina Palumbarit, Susan Syquia and Fr. Cecil Datar for helping the less fortunate.

Those who wish to recommend a parish that needs help can write Fr. Cecil Datar at 700 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, or call 633-9620.

MSP-JPIC desk programs

THE MISSION Society of the Philippines (MSP) and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Desk (JPIC) recently held a successful concert featuring multitalented musician Gary Granada at the Mandaluyong gymnasium, with the Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish. The concert raised funds for the MSP-JPIC desk programs such as environmental awareness, livelihood projects, overseas workers and training center.

Those who wish to help can call Fr. Jim Lalaguna at 532-7756/6216.

Environmental education

ONE hundred faculty members participated in a recent seminar workshop on environment education with the intention of integrating it with the syllabi. The UST Environmental Education Program, with the UST Center for Educational Research and Development, held a three-day seminar last July at the UST Graduate School. Project leader was Dr. Carmen Kanapi. Modules are now being developed with the help of the Metrobank Foundation.

Marian pilgrimage tour

ANOTHER group is leaving on Sept. 17 on a Marian pilgrimage tour that includes Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Belgium where one can find the Shrine of Our Lady of Beauring known as "Virgin with the Golden Heart" and Our Lady of the Poor in Banneaux. Please call Chit de la Torre at 815-6925 or 141-101758.

Incidentally, the approval of the truth of the apparitions of Our Lady of the Poor in Banneaux was given by the Vatican on Aug. 22, 1949, 16 years after the apparitions began in 1933. This info was given to me by Mila Dolores who is a devotee of the Virgin under this title.

2,000 Hail Mary's

THE 2,000 Hail Mary's will be recited again on Sept. 1, First Saturday, 8 a.m., at the Mary Queen of Peace Church in Queen's Row, Bacoor, Cavite. When we announced the same event that took place on Aug. 4, First Saturday, many people went.

Trip to Medjugorje

ARPEX Travel is now preparing a group that will visit Medjugorje on Oct. 3. Included in the itinerary is a visit to Poland where one can see the shrine of the Divine Mercy. Those interested can call Alice at 525-3883/3902.

'Food for the soul' café

ONCE in a while, we discover a place where we can sip monk's blend coffee while enjoying a good book. Café Juansoy at the Royal Bay Terrace Building on UN Avenue corner Cortada is such a place. It is a place for a quiet read, to contemplate and, most of all, for good food.

Juansoy also serves products done by the Good Shepherd nuns, *biscocho* by the seminarians of Our Lady of the Pillar Seminary labeled "Blessings" who, by the way, also make fruitcakes. There are also *pan de sal*, *ensaymada*, *polvoron*, bottles of *tawilis* in olive oil, *achara*, strawberry jam, blueberry jam, etc.

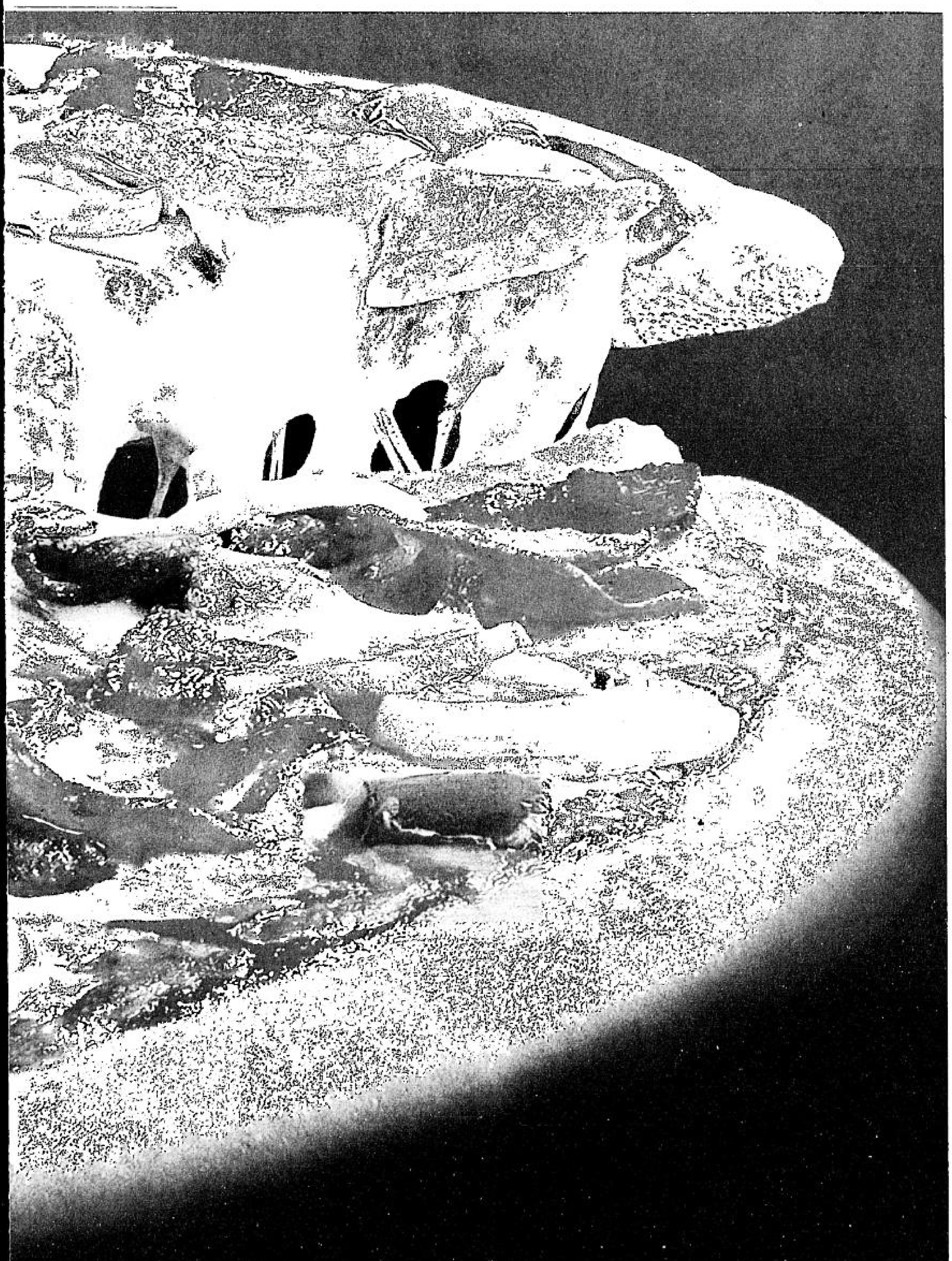
Not only is your body fed, but your soul as well. If you wish to book for a special function, please call Zach Villacorta at 484-1197 or e-mail foodforthesoul@ zpdee.net.

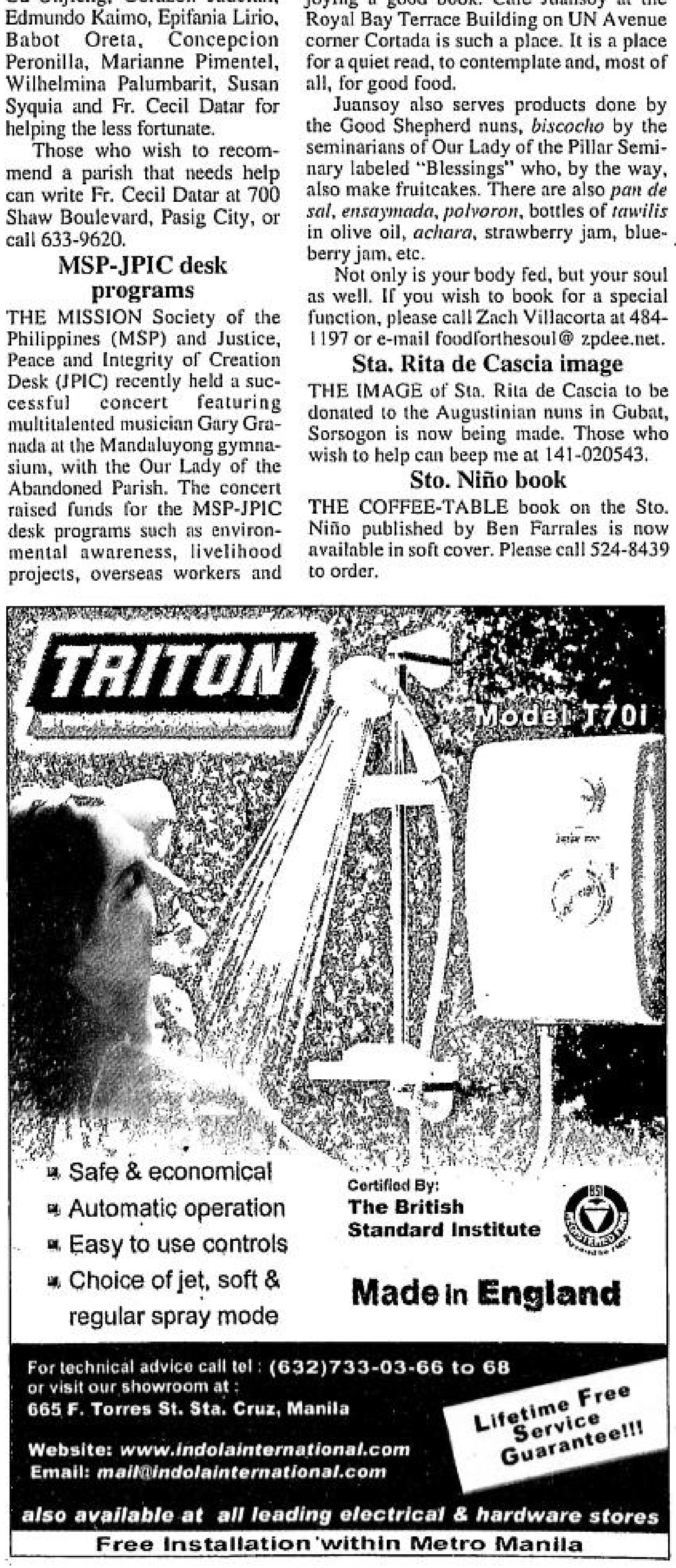
Sta. Rita de Cascia image

THE IMAGE of Sta. Rita de Cascia to be donated to the Augustinian nuns in Gubat, Sorsogon is now being made. Those who wish to help can beep me at 141-020543.

Sto. Niño book

THE COFFEE-TABLE book on the Sto. Niño published by Ben Farrales is now available in soft cover. Please call 524-8439 to order.

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SUPER TERRIFIC
VALUES

upto 50%
price breaks
mallwide

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-454, Series of 2001